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A STUDY OF DANTE

BY

SUSAN E. BLOW

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

WILLIAM T. HARRIS, LL.D.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE great world-poets, of whom it is usual to reckon four—including Homer, Shakespeare, and Goethe, besides Dante,—hold their supreme place in popular estimation as much on account of the themes they have treated as on account of the perfection of poetic form which belongs to their great works. They have one and all distinguished their literary work from that of other poets by the profound insight with which they have treated the problem of life in its varied aspects. Their poems may be called ethical poems on account of the manner in which they have shown the reaction of the social whole against the attacks of Titanic individuals.

One may write "poetry for poets," as it is called—such poetry as has attained to the great vision of the correspondence of nature to the soul of Man,—without having attained the ethical insight. The ethical insight sees the substantiality of institutions—family, state, church,—and does not often come to the poet until he has reached the middle of his life's journey. But the poetry for poets and poetical natures is true poetry on account of the vision alluded to—that of

insight into the correspondences which furnish us with new expressions for ideas and moods of the soul. It takes rank, however, far below the poetry of a world-poet, for the reason that the latter has used his vehicles of expression to reveal to all individual men their substantial manhood as embodied in the institutions of civilization.

Dante's place is that of the earliest literary voice of Christian civilization, coming two millenniums after Homer had sung the first aspirations of European individuality, then newly broken off from the Asiatic stem. With individuality had bloomed Greek art, republican states, the scientific spirit, and finally it had found the substantial forms of the will in Roman law. The adjustment of the individual to the sovereignty of law had broken the necks of all nations, and the fulness of time had come for Christianity, with its doctrine of the divine-human God whose relation to the individual human soul was that of Father to son. The "ten silent centuries," which Tieck describes as finding a voice in Dante, were all needed to complete the assimilation of the heathen view of the world, which itself was essentially a "religious" view, in the sense given to the word by a great saint of the English Church, Maurice. For the Roman *religio* was essentially a ritual, and ceremonial to the last degree.

Up to Dante's time Christianity had reacted against pantheistic faiths that it encountered in Western Asia and Egypt, to such an extent that it laid too much stress on the arbitrary will of God, and ignored the laws of nature, and came very near to denying even the rational consistency in the divine decrees. A change had set in, which still, after seven centuries, swings towards the opposite extreme in our own time,—a tendency to discover a divine eternal nature of things even superior to God's will, and to set extravagant value on discovered natural laws.

The Mohammedan world-movement was the immediate cause of the change. Its external phase appeared in wars of conquest that finally led Christendom to unite in the Crusades. Its internal phase took shape in Arabian philosophy and natural science, taught in its schools in Spain, which compelled Christendom to stand on the defensive in scholarship and philosophic thought. These two phases had produced their greatest effects before Dante was born. The eighth and last Crusade, led by St. Louis of France, was begun when he was five years old. Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus died before his fifteenth year, after they had given a scientific form to Christian Theology.

Coming at this epoch Dante elaborates his great

poem. Its form is partly theologic. A new literary art had not hitherto emerged from the new religion which had destroyed all of the old. We see now an entirely new literary form invented, not epic nor yet dramatic or lyric. In the "Divine Comedy" the collisions of the individual with institutions are not borne by special heroes whose fate we watch with breathless interest as we follow the caprices of Achilles or the wanderings of Ulysses. But instead of one collision for the entire poem, we behold hundreds of such collisions as we pass through the lower world and climb the mountain of purification. The tragic personalities are so foreshortened in the perspective in which we see them that their deeds seem to issue forth from their perverse wills and to return immediately upon their persons in the shape of sufferings too grievous to be borne. That the responsible, free agent, man, does to himself whatever he does, that his deeds return to the doer, is made apparent in this poem without the delays of a long life or even the intervention of the incidents of a long epic poem.

Commentary has accumulated its labors to clear up the philological difficulties of the archaic text. Archæology and history and biography have also been drawn upon to illustrate the obscure passages. But all these useful, even indispensable instrumen-

talities leave us still outside of the "mystic unfathomable song." We must press through into its heart and soul. The thought, what there is essential in it, must be translated out of the theosophic form of the Middle Ages, to the end that we may find nourishment in the poem for ourselves in this our own century.

Commentary has thrown light on the mythological framework of the poem, as well as on its vocabulary of words and its figures and prosody. But on the perennial significance of the vision as a valid and eternal insight of Dante, there is still room for the best species of commentary. It is confessed that this requires a higher order of talent. Erudition, the result of patient and praiseworthy diligence that searches through the piles of dusty rubbish for the wherewithal to illustrate the great poem and bring us face to face with a long-vanished era of human life,—this, by itself, produces for us the series of commentaries that have brought about the resurrection of the body of this poem. But it requires profound thought and subtle poetic gifts to bring back its living soul.

To those who suppose themselves sufficiently equipped in the possession of the contributions of erudition to the work of illustrating Dante's poem, it may seem a useless task to add a commentary on

the view of the world therein presented and on its permanent validity. Upon examination, however, we become convinced that there are numerous commentators on the great world-poets who find their delight in illustrating their authors by the results of mere erudition, without looking forward to any possible use that may be derived from their labors in unlocking treasures of beauty and truth. And we are even more surprised to learn from their confessions that they are profound sceptics in respect to the doctrine, that there is in these works any truth to be found, or any view of life embodied there, that will bear translation into our current forms of statement.

Their theory of the greatest literary productions therefore is hostile to the view that looks upon them as revelations of human nature. Surely, if Homer or Dante saw deeply into human nature, their insights are precisely what is most valuable to us, and a commentary unfolding this insight the most profitable to read. We should need, not one alone of this species of commentary, but rather an entire literature of such, in order to furnish aid to all classes of minds that may be benefited by access to the great poems.

An objection has been made to commentary on the spiritual contents of the great poems by quite a different class of literary men from those sad scep-

tics who believe the meaning of the great poem has become obsolete forever, and who merely wish to decorate its empty dwelling. I refer to those who say that the poem itself is its best commentary. They admit, however, the first class of commentators, those of erudition, for they see quite plainly that the externalities of costume have grown antiquated and need to be made familiar again. But they do not perceive equally well that the view of the world of one epoch presents itself under a masque that obscures it to another. They seem to forget that the great world-poem holds up its mirror to the world of humanity, and reflects its deepest secrets as well as its most open and external fashions and forms. It is not a system of philosophy, nor of theology, nor any form of science or history. It is a work of art, reflecting the life of the age, and therefore contains all of these elements organically united with the other elements of that life. Hence, if we are to become distinctly conscious of them, we must discover them one by one through analytical labors. And, just as in all successful undertakings, we must avail ourselves of the results of the toil of others to reinforce our own.

The analysis that points out the treatment of a separate thread in the poem does not destroy the poem by some process of anatomy, as has been

feared. All that is necessary to render analytic studies of the greatest service in helping us to realize the organic unity of the poem is that the commentator shows how the unity of the poem is reflected in the special element treated. The more reflections of the central idea made to appear in the details of the poem, the more its organic wholeness is shown.

All new students of literature need guides to what is essential. No advanced student of literature can afford to neglect the combined labors of his fellow students. Each individual purifies his own critical judgment through the aid of the brotherhood of scholars.

In this view, the following essays by Miss Blow, on the significance of the divine comedy as a study of life in its human and divine aspects, must be welcomed by the large and growing class of thoughtful readers of Dante. They will find, if I mistake not, many new and important reflections on the permanent content of the poem, and many hints that will aid in the interpretation of its mythologic forms into valid meanings to the consciousness of the present age. Her sympathetic study has enabled her to reproduce, in a vivid manner, the atmosphere of the three several parts of the poem and assist us to feel the ethical inspiration that fired the poet. The Inferno is shown to us not as a remote and

monstrous product of the faith held by man in his infancy, but as a living reality that surrounds us all —an essential condition of the soul when it sways from harmony with its true nature. The Purgatory is seen as the perennial struggle of the repentant soul for purification. The Paradiso is not a mere future state of blessedness, but also the eternal atmosphere of all right-doing and knowing of the true. Dante's powerful images are shown to have truth for us, not as literal or prose statements of doctrine, but as figurative statements of the profoundest insights into human life.

W. T. HARRIS.

CONCORD, MASS.,
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A STUDY OF DANTE.

INFERNO.

To know how hard the wind is blowing one must sail against the wind. To measure the force of a stream one must swim against its current. That the tendencies of any given age may be comprehended, they must be surveyed from the standpoint of an age different in its habits of thought. Drifting with his generation, the individual cannot gauge its strength, and sees neither the direction in which it moves nor the goal toward which it tends.

We live in an age which is rapidly losing the consciousness of sin. Equally alien to our feeling are the physical self-scourgings of the mediæval saint and the spiritual agony of the Puritan. The burden which bore so heavily upon Christian sits very lightly upon us. We hear much of the soul of goodness in things evil, and, reversing the disguise of Satan as an angel of light, we are learning to look on sin as an angel veiled in darkness. The doctrine of the fall of man is interpreted to mean ascent to a more conscious plane of existence. "Paradise is a park where only brutes, not men, can remain," and it is a

rise and not a fall which is symbolized in the mythus of the woman, the serpent, and the tree. Out of the depth of Donatello's sin is born the conscience which converts the faun into the man. Faust fearlessly allies himself with the Devil, and makes him the instrument of his salvation. The poets with one voice teach that "by ministry of evil good is clear," that "evil will bless and ice will burn," and that we "rise on stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things." The scientist assures us that "men end by going right after trying every imaginable way of going wrong," and the history of the world is shown to be a course of practical logic, through which man is gradually learning wisdom from his mistakes. Thus sin is no more sin, and, instead of groaning with the Apostle, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" we plume ourselves on the secrets wrested from conquered wrong, and cheerfully condone the wrong that is yet unconquered.

The thought upon which this view of sin ultimately rests is, that man can only learn what he is by finding out what he is not, and that the violation of his ideal nature in its reaction reveals him to himself. So long as he acted in accord with his nature, there could be neither self-consciousness nor spiritual freedom. There must be contrast before there can

be comprehension, and, as we know light through darkness, we can realize good only through the ministry of evil.

Whatever else this theory may or may not be, it is distinctly anti-Christian. There can be no sympathy between a philosophy which sees in sin the condition of a realized self-consciousness and a religion which heralds its founder as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The Christian consciousness has always defined sin as rebellion against God, "the act of a traitor who aims at the death and overthrow of his sovereign." Sin, according to the Christian Church, is that which, had it power so to do, would drag God from his throne, and would rejoice could He cease to be. It brings forth no good but only evil, and evil continually, and, far from rising through it to the heights of vision and attainment, man sinks through it to a condition worse than that of the unconscious brute.

To realize how totally the thought of to-day contradicts the Christian theory of sin, one needs but to study that theory as expounded by the great poet of the Church in his "Divina Commedia." Nowhere shall we find such vital grappling with the universal problem of man as in the utterances of this sternest and tenderest of poets. "Behold, therefore, the goodness and the severity of God," exclaims the

inspired writer. "Behold the infinite love and the infinite rigor of the man taught of God," our hearts exclaim as, following Dante, we penetrate to the ultimate depths of sin and misery, and learn at last the genesis, the development, and the outcome of evil.

Dante has been called the voice of ten silent centuries, and certain it is that the truths to which he gave immortal expression had, during these ages, been slowly crystallizing in the consciousness of the Christian world. His poem is not individual, but universal; he utters not his own thought, but the unformulated creed of Christendom. Nay, he reaches beyond Christianity and speaks to the universal conscience of humanity—that inward witness which is always calling upon man to rejoice in his freedom and tremble before the responsibility bound up with it.

The "Divina Commedia" is the outcome of a profound and exhaustive reflection upon the facts of the moral world. Reflection, in all of its forms, involves the reduction of the infinitude of particular things to a finitude of classes, and culminates in that philosophic insight which reduces this finitude of classes to the unity of an inclusive process. Adequate reflection upon the moral world should therefore result in the classification of its complicated

phenomena, and in the ultimate discovery of the genesis and development both of good and evil.

It is because Dante has traced this genetic development that the "Divina Commedia" is an organic whole vitalized throughout by one all-penetrating thought. This fundamental insight is that, as man is a derivative being, the condition of a true development must be an uninterrupted connection and communion with his source. As right relationship to the sun solves the secret of the planetary system, so right relationship to God solves the secrets of life and thought. As a stream cut off from its fountain-head must inevitably dry up, so the soul which separates itself from God destroys itself. It is a dying soul, which can be restored to life only by the renewal of its relationship to God. In the substitution of self for God lies the germ of all sin. "Because thy heart is lifted up, and thou hast said I am God and I sit in the chair of God (whereas thou art a man and not God), and hast set thy heart as if it were the heart of God, therefore I will bring thee to nothing, and thou shalt not be, and if thou be sought for thou shalt not be found any more forever."

Conformably to this theory, the "Divina Commedia," in its three main divisions, treats of the corruption of the will, the purification of the will, and the perfection of the will. The "Inferno" traces

the history of the soul, as, emptied of God, it becomes progressively filled with self; the "Purgatorio" shows us the gradual emptying of self, and the "Paradiso" the filling of the soul with God. The poem culminates with the rapture of the beatific vision—the steadfast, immovable, attentive gaze of the soul upon that Light, "in whose presence one such becomes

> "That to withdraw therefrom for other prospect
> It is impossible he e'er consent."

It is a truth which is too generally ignored, that all duties arise out of relationships. It is because there are fathers, mothers, children, sisters, and brothers, that there are parental, filial, and fraternal duties; it is because a man has a country that he should be a patriot; it is through friends that we learn the sweet obligations of friendship; and it is because the world is full of the aged, the poor, the sinful, and the sorrowing, that we are called on to exercise reverence, pity, charity, and sympathy. Finally, it is because our souls are bound up with a material frame that we struggle for the conquest of the flesh by the spirit, and it is because there is an infinite God that our souls yearn towards him with aspiration, and bow before him with awe. Particular relationships are the conditions of particular

duties, and all particular relationships are grounded in the fundamental relationship which makes them possible.

Keeping before us this central thought of the poem, let us now study in detail the problem of sin and punishment as dealt with by Dante in the "Inferno." Omitting the first two cantos, which relate how the poet came to undertake his arduous pilgrimage, we find ourselves at the beginning of the third canto standing before the gate of Hell. Over the gate is this inscription:

"Through me is the way into the doleful city; through me the way into the eternal pain; through me the way among the people lost. Justice moved my high Maker; Divine Power made me, Wisdom Supreme and Primal Love."

The sense of this inscription is so alien to the sentiment of to-day, that it is hard for our minds to grasp. Its implicit argument is this: If man is free he is responsible. If he is responsible, justice requires the return of his deed upon him. To spare him the result of his own activity is to insult his ideal nature by denying his freedom. Hell is the Creator's final tribute of respect to the being he made in his own image; and, as both Wisdom and Love imply recognition of the essential nature of their object, they concur with Justice in demanding the punishment of the sinner.

It is easy to find fault with this view of man's nature and responsibilities, but it is hard to substitute for it one which is not open to more vital objection. The practical denial of human freedom would be the dissolution of organized society, for our whole intercourse with each other is based upon a recognition of that responsibility which current theories so lightly set aside. It is to me a most significant fact that the false philosophy which denies man's responsibility culminates in denial of his immortality; and, if it emancipates the sinner from the fear of hell, it destroys for the struggling saint the hope of heaven. In its outcome it is more cruel far than the faith it condemns, for that, at least, has eternal happiness as a set-off to everlasting pains, while this makes all our hopes a lie, and sinks the evil and the good in the same blank annihilation.

What mainly interferes with our acceptance of the Dantean theory of punishment is the unconscious materialism of our thought. By the average mind penalty is conceived as something external to, and distinct from, the spiritual result of sin. It is something done to the sinner, not something which he through his sin does to himself. Dante's view (it would seem to me) is that through repeated sinful acts the soul attains a grade of permanence in sin. The long conflict between good and evil comes at

last to an end, and the sin in which we have indulged is stamped upon the soul as its eternal form. And, as sin is dominant within, it is universalized without us. The glutton is immersed in his gluttony, and surrounded by other gluttons; the carnal sinners are driven about in the total darkness of their souls by the fierce winds of their passions, and are cut off by their own limitation from comprehension of any other type of character than their own. By our own acts we determine ourselves, and only what we are can we recognize in others. Our punishment is what we ultimately become mirrored to consciousness through our surroundings.

Throughout the "Inferno" the varying punishments are simply the external symbols of varying phases of sinful consciousness. The wrathful are immersed in boiling mud; the violent in a river of blood. The hypocrites, "a painted people," wearing cloaks all gilt without, all lead within, are moving round with steps exceeding slow, and in their looks are "tired and overcome." The thieves, whose deed universalized would make it impossible to know "whose was whose or what was what," are seen in an eternal process of transformation into the serpents, who aptly symbolize their creeping stealth. Flatterers are immersed in filth, "for those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the

heart, and they defile a man." Schismatics, who have made division where there should be unity, are eternally cleft by a sword-bearing devil, and the consuming flame of conscience swathes the evil counsellors who have employed God's great gift of wisdom to deceive their fellow-men.

Man is free! This is the first truth emphasized by our mediæval poet. Pass now with him through the gate of Hell, and learn how free man makes himself the slave of sin. "Our wills are ours to make them thine"; rational freedom is the soul's voluntary choice of the good. We have said that we should trace through the "Inferno" the progressive filling of the soul with self, and lo! the first spirits we meet, as we step upon the starless plain, are those who illustrate selfishness in its emptiest and most abstract form. Dante's description of them is a most scathing one. "They lived without blame and without praise; to God they were neither faithful nor rebellious. Heaven chased them forth, and the deep hell refused to receive them. Mercy and judgment disdain them, and report of them the world permits not to exist. They have no hope of death, and their blind life is so mean that they are envious of every other lot." The description concentrates in the twofold statement that "they were for self, and that they never were alive." They did

not deny the truth, they simply never thought about it; they did not rebel against God, they *only* ignored Him; they did not consciously assert themselves, they merely indulged each passing caprice. They are the representatives of that frivolous class who live only in the moment, and in the moment think only of themselves. Petty passions sting them like wasps and hornets, and, goaded by the capricious love of change, they forever chase a whirling ensign which scorns all pause. In the stage of immediate impulse they have substituted self for God, and indulgence for obligation; the house is empty, swept, and garnished, all too ready for the evil spirits who will soon rush in. Is it significant that of these souls there is such a long train that scarcely could the poet believe death had undone so many?

As the return of man's deed upon him is the Creator's recognition of the creature's dignity, so the fruit of sin in the soul is the denial of personal accountability. The victim of caprice is always a fatalist; he is the slave of his own unconscious self, and he projects this inward necessity as external limit. The souls who assemble on the joyless strand of Acheron "blaspheme God, and their progenitors, the human kind, the place, the time and origin of their seed and of their birth." Every thing

and every person in the universe is to blame for their condition except themselves.

Summing up this introductory canto, we have, first, recognition of the source of punishment in the Divine Justice; second, recognition of the first phase of sin in the blank form of selfishness; third, recognition of the outcome of sin in the repudiation of personal freedom and responsibility. In the remaining cantos selfishness will realize itself in an infinitude of particular manifestations, and culminate in the concrete unity of selfish form and content in the person of Lucifer.

We have seen that duties arise out of relationships, and that all secondary relationships are grounded in the fundamental relationship to God. Man draws from God the power to realize himself. It follows that the progressive realization of his own ideal nature is a progressive approximation to the divine type, and that the complete indwelling of God is the perfection of man. Truth and goodness are not abstractions—they are the eternal thought and will of God. What God thinks is the true; what God wills is the good—or, rather, as in Him knowing and willing are one, truth and goodness are but distinctions in the unity of His Eternal Act.

Some degree of insight into the nature of God is

therefore the necessary condition of any understanding of what is right or wrong, good or evil. If to be good is to be like God, and to be wicked is to be unlike Him, it is of infinite importance that we know who and what He is. Parallel with the vanishing consciousness of sin has been the disappearance of all definiteness in the conception of the first principle of the world, and the theory that God is unknowable has kept even pace with the theory that man is irresponsible. The restoration of a divine ideal would be also the restoration of our guilty sense of alienation from it. "I have heard of Thee," exclaims Job, "by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee, *wherefore* I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

If we try to think the creative principle of the world, we come at once face to face with the idea of self-activity. By self-activity is meant an activity that acts upon itself: as a creative principle logically antedates all creation, it must be self-active, for the obvious reason that there is nothing but itself for it to act upon. Its activity, therefore, begins from and comes back to itself. It is a circular process, and therefore necessarily an eternal process. It has been complete from all eternity, and yet repeats itself in every moment of time.

Rightly apprehended, a process of self-activity is

seen to be necessarily a process of thought, for thought alone has the power of acting upon itself. All natural objects and forces are results of an activity external to themselves. But thought creates itself, embodies itself, realizes itself, and defines itself. There can be nothing higher, or wider, or deeper than thought, for "it is the form of an infinite content"; there can be nothing back of thought, for, whatever we may set up as prior to thought, thought gets back of it through thinking it. In a word, that which exists in thought cannot antedate or include thought.

The realized form of thought is self-consciousness, and this involves the distinction of the self from the self, and the persistent identification with self of the self thus distinguished. The eternal distinction of the self is the begetting of an eternal object, the eternal identification of this object with self is eternal recognition, communion, or love. This is the truth revealed to faith in the doctrine of the Trinity, and which inspired the rapt utterance of Dante when he exclaimed:

> "O Light eterne, sole in thyself that dwellest,
> Sole knowest thyself and known unto thyself,
> And knowing lovest and smilest on thyself."

Self-activity and communion, or spiritual interpenetration, are therefore the marks of the divine nature.

Hence man, made in the image of God, develops through active combination with his fellows. Through organization the individual man avails himself of the strength, the experience, and the insight of total humanity. Whatever nullifies activity, or strikes at participation, is evil, and the final outcome of evil must be stagnation absolute and isolation complete.

This insight enables us to understand the grading of sins in the "Inferno." All sin strikes either indirectly or directly at organized society. The less heinous sins are those which attack society indirectly, by destroying in the individual man the qualities through which combination is possible. These are the sins punished in the circles of Incontinence; the next degree of sin is that in which there is the attack of man upon individual men, as shown in the circle of Violence, and its final phase is that in which the sinner, first by fraud and then by treachery, attacks the social whole. That fraud made universal would cause a relapse into savagism is symbolized in the primeval giants who stand as sentinels over the region of the fraudulent, while the self-exclusion and self-destruction brought about by treachery are strikingly imaged in Lucifer frozen in the bottom of the pit.

Having defined sin, and indicated its increasing

degrees, our next object must be to seek its origin, and trace its gradual development and expansion within the soul. This can best be done by a careful analysis and comparison of the sins punished in the different circles of the "Inferno." If we can discover in them a principle of evolution, and can show that in the process of sin man's essential nature is progressively destroyed, we shall have settled the question as to whether sin is the instrumentality through which man rises out of the condition of unconscious unity into that of spiritual fellowship with God.

Limbo, the outermost circle of the "Inferno," is peopled by souls who have perished through defect. Virgil, who is one of them, describes himself as "by not doing, not by doing, lost." Among these souls some have attained to heroic virtue and some to philosophic insight. They have realized the fulness of purely human thought, of human love, and of earthly fame. The great poets have pleasure in each other, and Aristotle, "master of those that know," sits amid a philosophic family, who all regard and do him honor. But no finite good can satisfy an infinite craving, and if even the highest purely human life be placed under "the form of eternity," its honors will show themselves empty and its joys declare themselves vain. "Naught but God can

satisfy the soul He maketh great." Hence the great souls in Limbo, without torment, suffer sadness, and without hope live on in desire.

Following Limbo are four circles in which are punished the souls "who subjected reason to lust," the Glutton, the Avaricious and Prodigal, and the Wrathful and Gloomy. The carnal sinners are borne ever onwards in the sweep of a hellish storm; the gluttons are lying prostrate on the ground; Cerberus, "emblem of their blind voracity," eternally barks at them, and rends them, and down upon them pours unceasing a storm of hail, foul water, and snow. The avaricious and prodigal, "those who placed their happiness in gold, and those who placed their happiness in what gold could buy," roll heavy weights and smite them against each other. The prodigal cries to the avaricious: "Why holdest thou?" and the avaricious retorts, "Why throwest thou away?' Intrinsically their sin is one. Make avarice universal, and trade and commerce are impossible, the movement of practical life ceases, and the social order is destroyed. Universalize prodigality, and the result is the same. In the one case no man can get any thing, and in the other no man has any thing. And as this twofold crime is essentially against society, and society rests upon the principle of recognition, both miser and spendthrift are made unrecognizable.

"Their undiscerning life which made them vile
Now makes them unto all discernment dim."

Sunk in the marshy Styx, naked and muddy, the souls of those whom anger overcame stand smiting each other, not with hands only, but with head and with chest and with feet; and beneath the water and fixed in the slime are the gloomy souls forever gurgling in their throats, "Sullen were we in the sweet air that is gladdened by the sun, carrying lazy smoke within our hearts, now lie we sullen here in the black mire." Profound insight of the poet, to mete one punishment to the wrath which makes man his neighbor's enemy, and the melancholy which makes him an enemy to himself; and subtle the analysis implied in the *lazy* smoke carried by the gloomy within their breasts. God is Self-Activity; man is made in his image: hence, all that is active rejoices the soul, and all that is passive palls upon it. Sloth is man's denial of himself; its next phase must be sullen gloom, and its final outcome suicide, corresponding to the final outcome of anger, which is murder.

In the eleventh canto of the "Inferno," the four classes of sins just described are grouped together under the general head of Incontinence, and this Incontinence is said to less offend God, and to receive less blame, than the malice and mad besti-

ality met with in the lower circles of the "Inferno." As contrasted with these deeper sins, the sins of incontinence are less conscious and deliberate, and indicate a less extended corruption of man's moral nature. They are sins of feeling rather than sins of thought or will. Their common root is that the man seeks self-gratification. Carnal sin, gluttony, and avarice arise from the excessive indulgence of natural appetites, and anger manifests the exaggerated self-love of those

> "Whom injury seems to chafe
> So that it makes them greedy for revenge."

If it be true that duties arise out of relationships, each special duty may be defined as expression of the feeling which should be stimulated by the relationship. The only knowledge presupposed is knowledge of the relationship itself. Thus a young child understands little of the distinctions between right and wrong, but from the very dawn of his conscious life has known himself as guarded by a mother's tireless care, and blessed by a mother's overflowing love. He should meet this love with love expressed in sympathetic obedience. Through obedience to wise commands he will himself become wise, for, as goodness is truth in act, doing the good must culminate in vision of the true. With compre-

hension the child becomes self-directing, following the good of his own independent choice. Indeed, we may say there has been choice from the beginning, but, whereas he first chose the right through faith in his mother, he now chooses it because he has come to know it as the substantial truth of his own ideal nature. The final stage of development is attained when, through repeated activity, he has so determined himself in the image of the good that he rises above choice, and by a sweet necessity of nature is constrained to the right.

Just as the child shapes himself into goodness through love for his mother, so man shapes himself into goodness through love for God. In tracing backward the history of man, we may arrive at a point when his mind is empty of all knowledge except the knowledge that he is and that God is. Consciousness of his own existence and consciousness of his primal relationship are the conditions of his normal development. And as love should be awakened in the heart of the child by the love of the mother, so love in the heart of man should respond to the love which called him into being. We love Him because He first loved us, says the Apostle, and no student of Christ's method of training can have failed to observe that he grounds all spiritual graces in a personal relationship to himself.

I repeat, therefore, that goodness in man is progressively generated from the love of God. In its first phase empty and abstract, but concreting and defining itself through particular acts of obedience, this love creates in man the image of God. To know God we must be like God, for to comprehend a spiritual Being is to be in substantial identity with Him. Hence, Christ recognizes the attained fellowship of his disciples, by declaring that he will call them no more servants but friends, and the yearning soul of the Psalmist refuses to be satisfied until it shall awake in the likeness of God.

Generalizing our statement, we may say that the starting-point of human development lies in feeling. Feeling rushes into act and act defines man to himself. By making an external image of himself, and looking at what he has made, man learns what he is. Thus through feeling he rises into thought, and finally expresses the concrete unity of thought and feeling in the acts of the conscious will.

It follows that any interruption or perversion of the course of man's normal development must necessarily originate within the sphere of feeling. This perverted feeling, rushing into expression, makes for man a false image of himself. Thus his thought is corrupted, and he sees what is *not* instead of what is, and this results in an activity of the will, which is in

supreme contradiction of his ideal nature, and in supreme violation of all his fundamental relationships. There can be no perversion of the intellect and will which does not imply a logically prior perversion of the feelings—no stage of conscious and deliberate sin without an antecedent stage in which the sympathies have become alienated from God.

It is therefore with profound intention that Dante places in the outermost circles of the "Inferno," sinners in the unconscious stage of alienated love. This alienation of feeling is discerned by him as the logical condition of the deeper degrees of sin to be punished in the lower hell. Nor does the poet leave us to abstract his theory from the content of the poem, but, in the seventeenth canto of the "Purgatorio," he himself traces all sin to "the excess, defect, or perversion of love." Man has an infinite power of loving. Infinite love demands an infinite object. If man loves God supremely, he will love all other objects in right degree. If he is slack in his love of God, he will love unduly self and finite objects. The excessive love of finite objects giving birth to struggle for their possession, changes into hate the love man should bear to his fellow. Such is the genesis of the seven capital sins. Sloth is the slack love of God; lust, gluttony, and covetousness, are the excessive love of finite objects; pride is the

distorted love of self; and envy and anger are distortions of the love which should exist between man and man. Viewed from the standpoint that duties arise out of relationships, lust is rebellion against the ideal of man in his relationship to the family; gluttony is perversion of the relationship between soul and body; covetousness, envy, and anger, are practical denials of the relationship of the individual to the social whole; and pride is the supreme negation of man's relationship to God. Conceived as a developing process, sin begins in the slackening of love to God, and culminates in the supreme love of self. Hence, sloth is the first sin found within the "Inferno," and spiritual pride is punished in its lowest depth. Conversely, pride is the first sin expiated in Purgatory, because, until the self ceases to be supreme, there can be no return of the soul unto God.

The first blessing of the Saviour of men is bestowed upon the poor in spirit. Humble receptivity is the condition of spiritual growth. The first mark of humility is, that it mourns its own defect; the second is the meekness which bears lovingly defect in others. Out of the recognition of lack is born that hunger and thirst after righteousness which is the panting of the soul for its God, and mercy is the living sign of the indwelling life of God. To have God's life dwelling within us is to be like God, and

hence able to see God ; and as God is Love, and Love is recognition and reconciliation, the vision of God makes the pure in heart the peacemakers of the world.

The atmosphere in the circles of Incontinence is one of simple darkness, apt emblem of the soul whose light is darkened and at last extinguished by passion. The total darkening of the powers of the soul is the signal for the lighting of the flames of hell—symbols of a consciousness which through its own act has fixed itself in a state of permanent self-contradiction.

Dante's description of the transition from the circle of the Angry to the sixth circle, which is that of the Heresiarchs, is most vivid. "In my ears a lamentation smote me, whereat I bent my eyes intently forward. And the kind master said: 'Now, son, the city that is named of Dis draweth nigh, with the heavy citizens, with the great company—'

"And I: 'Master, already I discern its mosques, distinctly there within the valley, red as if they had come out of a fire.'

"And to me he said: 'The eternal fire that inward burns them shows them red as thou seest in this low hell.'

"And I: 'Master, what are those people, who, buried within those chests, make themselves heard by their painful sighs?'

"And he to me: 'These are the arch-heretics with their followers of every sect; and much more than thou thinkest the tombs are laden. Like with like is buried here; and the monuments are more and less hot.'"

If the sins in the circles of Incontinence may be traced to the supremacy of self in the emotions, heresy may be defined as the manifestations of self-love in the intellect. Without an undue love of self a man cannot become a heretic. The perversion of thought is a direct outcome of a perverted state of feeling. It is the recognition and assertion by the intellect of the distorted universe created out of sinful emotion. The man who persistently yields to his fleshly appetite must ultimately lose faith in his own higher powers. The man who lives only for the moment practically denies his immortality, and from the practical to the theoretic denial there is but a step. The man who acts as though God were not is travelling the high-road toward Atheism.

The important point to be noticed in this connection is, that because heresy is an outcome of sinful feeling it has in itself a sinful character. It is impossible to divorce what a man thinks from what he is, and it is because we have illogically asserted this separation that we have become as careless and inert in our own thought as we are lazily tolerant of the

thought of others. Starting with the assumption that it makes no difference what we believe, we have come to believe in nothing. Ignoring our responsibilities, we have drifted into doubt of our power. The saddest sight in a sad world is this universal spectacle, of minds enslaved by their own ignorance and paralyzed by their own inactivity. The one thing in life which to the aroused soul seems worth doing, is, to waken other souls from their death-like sleep; and the wail of prophet and poet, of saint and Saviour is, that the eyes of mankind are blind, and their ears are waxed deaf.

The circle of the Heresiarchs is the transition from the sins of feeling to the sins of conscious will. To love self more than God is the sin of feeling. To see self instead of God is the sin of intellect. To create a world like the false self thus seen is the sin of the conscious will. Throughout all the spheres of sin, the common element is the abstraction of the individual from his relationships. Lust is this abstraction in the region of feeling. Pride is this abstraction in the sphere of intelligence. Therefore the theologians teach that lust is the pride of the body, and pride is the lust of the soul; and Dante stigmatizes the rebellion of Lucifer as a "proud adultery." Finally, covetousness is abstract individualism in its relationship to material things; man

wanting all for himself refuses to recognize the equal claim of others to the good things of the earth. In the very first canto of the "Inferno," Dante is confronted by these sins in the forms of the leopard, the lion, and the she-wolf; and the other so-called cardinal sins, as well as the deeper wrongs which arise from their combination, are by him always traced directly to these fruitful germs.

In the circle of the Violent is shown man's conscious attempt to realize his abstract individualism as against his neighbor, against himself, and against his God.

The violent against man are divided into two classes: those who attack life, and those who attack property; and these two forms of violence are traced to their roots in anger and covetousness. "Fix thy eyes upon the valley," cries Virgil to his follower, "for the river of blood draweth nigh, in which boils every one who by violence injures others. O blind *cupidity!* O foolish *anger*, which so incites us in the short life, and then in the eternal, steeps us so bitterly."

In the second division of the circle of the Violent are found sinners who have done to themselves what those in the first division did to their neighbors, *i. e.*, they have wasted their own substance and taken their own lives. That prodigality is covetousness

turned against self has been already shown, and that suicide is the outcome of that pride whose first degree is spiritual sloth grows evident as we read the graphic recital of the fierce soul which, in its disdainful mood, thought to escape disdain by death.

The sins punished in the third division of the circle of the Violent are even more obviously traceable to pride, lust, and covetousness. Supine upon the burning sand, Capaneus shows us that his pride is still unquenched ; while Jacopo Rusticucci and the unrecognizable usurers reveal to us, without need of comment, the genesis of their respective sins.

In order that we may rightly apprehend the nature of the sins of violence as well as those of treachery and fraud, we must have a clear idea of the relationship of will to feeling and thought. Will is that phase of the mind which objectifies—it is the concrete unity of feeling and thought—that which at once creates and recognizes its image. The corruption of the will is the corruption of man's total nature, and its result must be negative to that activity and communion which we have throughout recognized as the marks of the Divine. Relatively to society, it is the reduction of man to the abstract savagism of the Cyclops, " who neither planted nor ploughed, who had no laws and met in no councils, who dwelt alone in vaulted caves on mountain

heights, and each man, holding no converse with others, devised apart his wicked deeds." Relatively to the individual, it is his reduction to the condition of Lucifer, a condition of ignorance, impotence, and absolute loneliness. He may flap his bat-like wings, but the only result of this vain activity is to fix him more firmly in his ice.

In external correspondence to the total corruption of the soul, in the circle of Fraud pestilence is added to darkness and flame. "Here all the senses are assailed; the sight by murky air; the ear by lamentations 'that have arrows shod with pity'; the smell by stench of putrid limbs; the touch by hideous scurf; and the taste by thirst that craves one little drop of water." And as we are repelled by these symbols of sin, so our souls are repelled from the panders and flatterers—the simonists, sorcerers, and peculators; the hypocrites, thieves, evil counsellors, schismatics, and falsifiers, who inhabit Malebolge. We find it hard to analyze their consciousness, for where corruption has become universal the distinctions of sin are lost. The root of theft, for instance, is certainly covetousness, but before covetousness issues in theft it has allied itself with all the other cardinal sins. The poison of sin has so spread within the soul that there can be left in it no power of normal action. Hence Virgil blames Dante when

he weeps over the sorcerers, exclaiming: "Art thou too like the other fools? Who more impious than he that sorrows at God's judgment?"

The imagery of the last circle of the "Inferno" forcibly suggests the self-destruction which is the final outcome of selfishness. Lust has conceived and brought forth sin, and sin being finished brings forth death. Out of the sphere of darkness into the sphere of fire—out of the region of fire into a region of fire and blood—out of this into the loathsome pit of fraud, where pestilence is added to the darkness and the flame, and finally down from the pit of fraud towards frozen Cocytus, wherein are fixed the spirits of those who have committed the supreme sin of treachery.

Formed by the union of all the rivers of Hell, Cocytus stagnates because there is no lower depth towards which it can flow. Upon its frozen surface stand the giants. Nimrod, a dull and confused spirit, speaks a language no man can understand, and all other languages are incomprehensible to him. Ephialtes "has his right arm pinioned down behind and the other before, and a chain holds him clasped from the neck downwards." The sinners, immovable in the ice, have power only to weep, and as the tears gush from their lids they freeze, and this closes their eyes. The only other activities men-

tioned are butting, champing of the teeth, and the flapping of Lucifer's wings, which makes the winds that freeze Cocytus.

Sin has done its work! Made for combination with his fellows, each man through sin has isolated himself from all others. Made for activity, he has lost all power to act. The indulgence, the assertion, and the corruption of self, have issued in self-destruction. "Lo Dis, and lo the place where it behooves us arm ourselves with fortitude."

It may be asked: If this view of sin be true, what hope can there be for sinful man? If the logical movement of sin is not towards good but towards greater evil, how can the effect of even a single sin be undone? The answer to this question we shall find in the study of the "Purgatorio." Meanwhile let us carry from the "Inferno" the assurance that not until the Ethiopian changes his skin and the leopard his spots can *he* do good that is accustomed to do evil.

PURGATORIO.

THE theme of Dante's "Purgatorio" is the purification of the soul. It describes not a place, but a process; not a future possibility, but an ever-present reality. It represents the eternal transition from evil to good, and all struggling souls may find in it a reflection of their conflict and a sure prophecy of their final victory. Wherever there is spiritual development, *there* is Purgatory.

The theory of the poem is that goodness is not a dower, but an achievement. This second kingdom is one in which by effort "the human spirit doth purge itself." Man is a worm "born to bring forth the angelic butterfly." Paradise is at the top of a precipitous mountain. The climbing in the beginning is tiresome and painful, but "aye the more one climbs the less it hurts." There is nowhere in the poem a trace of the heresy which confounds what man is with what he may become, and which paralyzes effort by ignoring the significance of choice.

The sin which must be overcome is described vari-

ously as mist, slough, scum, blindness, and smoke, and as paralysis, langor, malady, weight, crookedness, and knot. As mist, slough, scum, blindness, and smoke, it is that which prevents us from seeing the true; as langor, weight, malady, and paralysis, it is that which impedes our pursuit of the good; as crookedness and knot, it represents the deed which must be undone before there can be any right doing.

The source of all goodness is God. Man becomes good by opening his heart to receive the stream of influence always pouring towards him from God. Holiness is not an evolution, but a revealed and communicated life. Sin in its last analysis is the substitution of self for God; the assertion of an abstract individualism as against a universal life; the futile effort of a withering branch to maintain its being apart from the vine to which it properly belongs. In the fifteenth canto of the "Purgatory" Dante sets forth this view with great clearness, explaining that the goodness, infinite and ineffable, which is above, "always gives of itself so much as it finds ardor." In the "Convito" he illustrates the same truth by suggesting how differently the light of the sun is received by the dull clod of earth, by pure gold, by precious stones which refract its rainbow-colors, and by the mirror through which it is con-

centrated into a burning-point. Finally, in the "Paradiso" he again repeats that the "brightness is proportioned to the ardor, the ardor to the vision."

In this view of the relationship of the soul to God is grounded the true conception of human freedom. Man is free when he knows, loves, and wills the good. Until then his freedom is ideal, not actual—something he may conquer but does not possess. He wins liberty by renouncing caprice; or, in other words, achieves selfhood by crucifying self. He becomes a freedman of the universe only by a self-emancipation from the slavery of ignorance and sin. Hence Virgil introduces Dante to the stern warden of Purgatory as one who is seeking liberty. Statius declares that only after five hundred years of pain has he felt "a free volition for a better seat." Not until he is near the summit of the purgatorial mount does Dante feel "for flight within him the pinions growing," and it is when they stand upon the topmost step of the long stairway that Virgil declares to him,

> "Free and upright and sound is thy free-will,
> And error were it not to do its bidding:
> Thee o'er thyself I therefore crown and mitre."

Man rises above choice through long exercise in right choosing. Holiness becomes an impulse only when it has long been a habit. Spontaneity in good-

ness is the final triumph of persistent and painful conflict with besetting sin.

The coin fresh from the mint of thought shows clearly its character and value. Circulation dims its lustre, wears away its substance, and blunts its edge. We pass it from hand to hand, careless of its lessening weight, and not even glancing at its fading image and superscription. Familiarity with a truth is generally in inverse proportion to its comprehension, and in the end there comes a time when men know it so well that they cease to think it.

Such has been in our day the fate of the truth which declares the relationship of each individual life to the life of God. As a real thought it seems to have almost died out of the minds of men. From a quickening principle it has shrunk into a formula; from a burning conviction it has faded into a sentiment, and we are now admonished that we assail its sanctity when we try to think it. Such admonition ignores the fact that thought conditions feeling by supplying the object which feeling demands. Even in the animal it is vision which arouses desire, as it is desire which stimulates to act. Thought, feeling, and will are not independent, but each lives in and through the others. If we do not see how God's grace is poured out upon us, we shall soon cease to feel the outpouring.

To really re-think our relationship to God we must consciously expand our faith in revelation. A living God is acting on our living souls. He has not once spoken and then forever relapsed into silence. He has not once shone on the world and left to it only this remembered light. Day by day He is shining to our eyes and speaking to our hearts. The infinite universe is His self-revelation, and by its reaction defines to us His perfection and our defects.

In the scientific doctrine of modification through environment we have the beginning of a true thought of relationship to God. To complete it we need only recognize that environment is spiritual as well as physical, and that it is not fixed but infinitely expansive. In a word, it stands for the totality of influence bearing upon the individual object, and it has the beneficent quality of widening and deepening to meet increasing need. In it resides the fulness by appropriating which the individual develops. Evolution, therefore, truly conceived, is not the thought of a less by its own inherent power becoming a greater, but the far deeper thought of actual nothingness lifted into being by the communication of life.

By the rewards and penalties of nature man learns physical laws, and through the reaction of organized humanity upon the individual is developed the sense of moral law or the ideal of duty. All

spiritual development is grounded in man's existence in the species. Culture is the process through which the individual reproduces within himself the experience of the race. Its goal is the complete realization of the species within the individual, and its essential condition such an attitude of man as shall render him accessible to the influence of mankind. This insight enable us to define goodness as perfect self-activity, realized in the perfect communion of each man with all men. Communion must be perfect in order that experience may be shared, activity must be complete in order that it may be reproduced. Hence, in sloth and selfish exclusion may be found the seeds of every vice. Still deeper consideration reveals sloth as the paralysis resulting from self-exclusion, and thus reduces the infinite variety of the poisonous growths of sin to the single fatal germ of spiritual pride.

We hide from ourselves the reality of God's action on our souls by blinding our eyes to the truth of mediation. We practically forget that, though the source of inspiration is the Divine Spirit, its instruments are men, and its organ is the Church. What truth do we know to-day which has not been declared to us by the voice of man? What man who has declared truth has not proclaimed that to him it was given by inspiration of the Spirit? The Spirit is the

indwelling life of that great Church which, in the profoundest sense, is the "Mother of the Soul." and this Church is organized humanity, ever revealing to individual man the divine ideal which, as soon as recognized, he identifies with his own deepest self. Because there is One Spirit in all men, man can combine with man; because this Spirit is divine there is the possibility of communion with God.

"Instruments of grace" are the mighty institutions which, revealing and enforcing ideal standards, enable the individual to measure his own defect and inspire him to overcome it; a "store-house of grace" is that great "deposit of faith," the true literature of the world; a "means of grace" is every work of art in which is incarnate a spiritual truth; "channels of grace" are all honest experiences of sorrow or joy; "ministers of grace" are the strong thinkers who redeem our feeble thought—the heroes who spur our languid wills and the saints whose ardor fans into fresh flame the dying embers of our devotion. The revelation is manifold and yet one; the inspiration from of old and yet ever new; the grace thus variously bestowed (as the old theologians truly taught) prevenient, co-operant, and illuminant—for it comes to us before we seek it—it fortifies our feeblest endeavor, and crowns our persevering struggle with the beatific vision of final truth.

Only with this thought of universal mediation in our minds can we understand the symbolism of Dante throughout the "Purgatory." Virgil, his Guide, personifying human reason, describes himself as an instrument of Grace. "I came not of myself," he declares, "but a Lady from heaven descended, at whose prayer I aided this one with my company." Purgatory has a warden, for defect demands guidance, and laggard spirits must be spurred to run toward the purifying mount. When night falls and danger threatens, angels descend to guard the praying shades. By the divine Lucia, Dante is borne in his sleep to the presence of the angel who guards the gate of Purgatory. Only at the entreaty of the three celestial Virtues does Beatrice turn upon the poet her holy eyes and unveil to him the beauty of her face, and only "as reflected in her eyes" can he behold the mystic Griffin shining, "now with the one now with the other nature." Throughout the sevenfold realm mediation is the central truth recognized by the repentant Spirits. "Make known my state to my good Costanza, for those on earth can much advance us here." "Tell my Giovanna that she pray for me." "I pray thee to pray for me when thou shalt be above." "Thus speedily has led me to drink of the sweet wormwood of these torments my Nella with her overflowing tears." Such

are the petitions and such the acknowledgments of the soul who, as Dante himself tells us,

> " Only pray that some one else may pray,
> So as to hasten their becoming holy."

Prayer is the expression of spiritual life. The more spiritual life there is in the world, the more swiftly is the individual borne forward on its strong currents. The more people there are who love well, says our poet, the more can each one love, " for as a mirror the one reflects the other." Conversely the good of one is the good of all, and hence when a single soul in Purgatory has prevailed over its sin the whole mountain shakes with joy and rings with a psalm of thanksgiving.

Having restored ourselves to participation in Dante's vitalizing thought, that man achieves goodness by appropriation of the divine life which is always offering itself to him, we may follow him in his journey through the realm of purification. This realm is figured as " the hill which highest toward the heavens uplifts itself." It rises from an island, and its base forms an Ante-Purgatory where souls are detained until they have atoned for delay in repentance. Around the mount of Purgatory proper run seven terraces whereon are punished the seven deadly sins. Stairways rough and steep lead up from terrace to terrace, and upon the summit of the

mountain is the Earthly Paradise. Around the shore of the island grow the rushes, which symbolize humility, because they alone of plants yield to the shock of waves. With them must Dante be girt before he can enter Purgatory. The cord of humility must take the place of that cord of mere human strength with which he had once thought to "catch the leopard of the painted skin," and which in his journey through the Inferno he had resolutely cast into the pit of fraud. Proud self-confidence, by excluding the soul from influence, paralyzes its powers, while humility, which makes man teachable, is the antecedent condition of all mental and spiritual growth.

The changed attitude of the soul is the significant distinction between the Purgatory and the Inferno. The spiritual universe is always the same, but it is differently reflected in the mirror of individual consciousness. The soul steeped in sin has become a distorting mirror which gives back love as hate, and heaven as hell. Each denizen of the Inferno might echo the despairing cry which Milton puts into the mouth of Lucifer: "What matter where, if *I* be still the same?" The consciousness of the penitents in Purgatory is a mirror which reflects truly but feebly —a glass over which there is a mist which must be removed. The repentant spirit knows its own sin,

but at first defines goodness negatively as simply the opposite of itself. In the recoil of pain it recognizes the antagonism of its evil deed to the spiritual whole and resolves on amendment; but the true spiritual ideal hovers before it dimly, being obscured by the clouds and smoke of its own sinful passions. There is, in a word, still indwelling sin, but there is no longer a consent of the will to sin.

How the change is brought about, who can say? Not through sinning, for sin is refusal to learn the lesson which grace is teaching through the ministry of pain. To me it seems that each soul should tremble in mingled rapture and fear before its own blessed and yet so often fatal power of choice. Grace may constrain, but it cannot coerce. Love may appeal, but it cannot compel. Two things are sure: Against his own will and without his own effort no man can be made holy or wise: to influence his will nothing will be left untried. How will the struggle end? I do not know. May man forever defy influence? I cannot tell. What I do know is that every committed sin sinks the soul into deeper darkness—fires it with more burning antagonism—freezes it in a more stagnant isolation. Sin is a help never, a hindrance always, to the progress of the spirit.

As the poets stand among the bending rushes on

the island shore, there arrives a boat steered by an angel and bearing souls to Purgatory. In contrast to the blasphemies of the spirits who assemble "on the joyless banks of Acheron," these shades are chanting the great psalm which, under the veil of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, declares the deliverance of the soul from sin. "Not unto us, O Lord! not to us, but to thy name give glory," is the refrain, and "hope in the Lord," the burden of the song. Sin projects internal limit as external fate, and curses not itself, but "God and the human race." Repentance sees that evil lies not in the universe but in self, and thus converts even the inward limit into vanishing defect. With the sense that we are slaves who may achieve freedom, emancipation has begun. What matters present ignorance to the heir of all knowledge? In foretaste of the joy which shall come with the morning, what becomes of the sorrow of the night?

Traversing the region of Ante-Purgatory, the poets meet four classes of penitents whose common characteristic is that they have deferred repentance until the end of life. The differences between them are very suggestive. The first throng seem to be moving their feet and yet seem not to move forward, thus suggesting effort without advance. These souls "have died in contumacy of Holy Church," and are

condemned to wait "outside the bank thirty times told the time that they have been in their presumption." The spirits of the second class stand listlessly in a shade behind a rock, and Belacqua, who is their typical representative, sits "embracing his knees, holding his face down low between them, and shows himself more careless than if Sloth herself his sister were." These are the simple procrastinators, and their condemnation is to remain outside the gate of Purgatory for a time as long as the time of their procrastination. The third throng are moving slowly forward and singing the *Miserere*. These are they who have been slain by violence, but, admonished by a light from heaven, repented at the last hour, and, "both penitent and pardoning," issued from life, reconciled to God. The fourth class embraces kings and princes who deferred repentance through the pressure of temporal cares. It is near sunset when the poets come upon them in a valley bright with grass and flowers, and fragrant with the sweetness of a thousand odors. These spirits sing a song of praise, and follow it with a prayer for protection during the rapidly descending night.

We understand Dante just so long as we keep constantly in mind that all his descriptions are external images of spiritual states. With him sin is not one thing and penalty another external to it, but

the inevitable reaction of sin is the penalty of sin. So salvation is ceasing to be evil and becoming good. Ante-Purgatory, as a whole, signifies that initial phase in the process of transition in which the soul simply turns away from evil. It represents a state of aspiration which has not yet deepened into energy—a sympathy with good which precedes its ardent pursuit. Souls in this state of development do not see God, but are quickened by a desire to see Him. The hovering ideal is not defined, but is "a substance of things hoped for and an evidence of things not seen." During this part of the journey the one injunction of Virgil is, to be "steadfast in hope," and the witness of the spirits is, that return to good is possible "so long as hope has any thing of green."

As the progressive emptying of self is the condition of a progressive recognition of the ideal, those souls who are most steeped in selfishness have before them the longest and most painful struggle. The four groups of spirits we have just considered typify four different grades of character. The presumptuous pride which excludes itself from influence condemns itself to movement in which there is no progress. The man who will not combine with other men cannot advance. He who will hear no teacher and read no books must remain in his igno-

rance. He who defies the laws and penalties of society crystallizes his own defect. Not listening to the voice of the great spiritual church, he makes himself "an heathen man and a publican." His is the supreme violation because holiness is the complete interpenetration of the individual and the universal life. Therefore, by every act he retrogrades, and with profound insight the poet declares that to undo his deed will require "thirty times told the time that he has been in his presumption."

For every moment of slothful procrastination man pays the penalty of loss of power, and persistent inaction must result in paralysis of the will. He who refuses to climb shall surely be brought to ask, "What 's the use of climbing?" Nor is inertia acknowledged inertia overcome. Only by seeking the whip and spur of active influence, and by effort kept up in spite of pain, can the supine sluggard lift himself—he who sits crouching rise to his feet, and he who stands listless begin a forward march.

The penitents slain by violence illustrate a higher grade of character. By the act of pardoning their slayers they have entered into the divine life of forgiveness. This new light dawning within them makes their darkness visible, and they pant and pray for the cleansing fire and the purifying stream. So through care for the welfare of their subjects the

princes in the valley have promoted their own. They have achieved a virtue which points to its own consummation. Reaching down to give help, they have learned to reach upward to receive it. The true King is himself a type and prophecy of the King of Kings, and, by reflecting the divine ideal, he begins to aspire toward it.

In the Valley of the Princes, Dante falls asleep and dreams that an eagle with feathers of gold swooping upon him snatches him upward to the fire. Out of this dream he wakes to find himself at the gate of Purgatory, and is told by Virgil that during his sleep he was borne thither by Lucia. That the dream is a "shadow of coming events," the poet himself tells us, declaring that in sleep "the mind almost prophetic in its visions is"—as in a related passage he affirms that "oftentimes before a deed is done sleep has tidings of it."

In a valuable appendix to his translation of the "Purgatory," Butler points out that "the eagle was from the earliest Christian times an emblem of the soul which most aspires to meditate on divine things, and as such was adopted for the special cognizance of St. John;" and he notices also that the fire up to which the poet is borne is the Empyrean Heaven or abode of that "Perfect Deity who alone perfectly sees and knows himself." In plain words, the dream

anticipates a revelation of the Divine ideal, and implies that through contemplation of this ideal the soul shall be changed into its likeness. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

The vision discerned is matched with the momentum acquired, for the poet wakes to find himself beyond the negative region of Ante-Purgatory, and in view of the true entrance to the cleansing mount. Herein is mirrored a universal fact of spiritual experience. How often after what has seemed like fruitless search for truth do its premonitions dawn upon the mind apparently unsought! How often after a moral struggle in which we seem to be growing worse instead of better do we suddenly find ourselves transported to a region of purer moral aspiration! The essential fact is the preceding struggle. Only he who persists in moving his feet, even when he seems not to move forward, shall dream of the eagle or be borne upward by Lucia. Grace can bestow only "so much of ardor as it finds," and thus, though all good is a gift, it is also a conquest. Yielding to passion, the unconscious transition is to a lower depth, as Dante swooning on the banks of Acheron wakes to find himself upon the brink of Hell.

All true representations of the origin and progress

of moral development have implied more or less clearly that only an inward vision of the ideal convicts of sin and inspires to effort. Whatever view may be taken of the history of the Jews, two things are certain. Of all ancient nations they had the clearest consciousness of God and the deepest sense of their own sin. The total revelation of the books of Exodus and Leviticus may be compressed into the two declarations—"I am the Lord your God," and "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." Immediately following this attained consciousness of truth and duty come the record of the sedition of Miriam and Aaron, the rebellion of Korah, the repeated murmurings of the whole people, the plague of fiery serpents, and the elevation of the symbolic serpent of brass. Translated from figurative representation into direct statement, the lesson taught is that the vision of truth defines existing defect. Sedition, rebellion, and complaint were not new in the world; what was new was the sense of their exceeding wrong. "Sin was in the world," says Paul, "before the law, but I had not known sin but by the law." The sting of conscience results from perception of what we are, in the light of what we should be.

In accord with this view of moral progress, Dante's dream of the Empyrean is followed by his profound self-abasement at the gate of Purgatory.

Three stairs lead up to the gate. The first is marble white, and in it the poet "mirrors himself as he appears"; the second is dark and uneven, and cracked lengthwise and across; the third is flaming red, as "blood that from a vein is spurting forth." These stairs symbolize that candid self-recognition which issues in heart-broken sorrow for sin and ardent consecration to God of the "life-blood of body, soul, and spirit." Drawn over them by Virgil, the poet prostrates himself at the feet of the angel, who guards the gate and whose gray robe symbolizes the "ashes of repentance." He smites upon Dante's forehead with a sword, describing thereon seven "P's," marks of the seven germinal sins which must now be purged from the penitent soul; plies the lock first with the silver key, "symbol of the science which discerns the true penitent," then with the golden key, "image of absolving power," and at last pushes open the gate with the significant exclamation:

> "Enter—but I give you warning
> That forth returns whoever looks behind."

The song of the *Te Deum* falls upon the ear, and thus "praising God and acknowledging him to be the Lord," the poets cross the boundary-line which separates regret from repentance, aspiration from energy, mere desire from consecrated resolve.

In Purgatory proper is represented the gradual elimination of that indwelling sin against which the soul in Ante-Purgatory has entered its protest. Evidently, therefore, we must expect to find upon the ascending terraces diminishing degrees of sin and increasing degrees of participation in the divine life. The process is not one in which the soul is "left empty and garnished," but one wherein evil is crowded out by expanding good.

As holiness is living in the universal life, those sins are most heinous which most consciously repudiate existence in the species and assert a naked, defiant, and self-destroying individualism. Hence, farthest from the Earthly Paradise is the terrace of the proud, as deepest in the Inferno is the frozen circle of the traitors, in whom pride reigns supreme. The characteristic of pride is that it applies to things spiritual the law of the unspiritual, and desires monopoly where the very nature of the object desired demands division. The belief that there *may* be, the desire that there *should* be, or the resolve that there *shall* be an unshared excellence constitutes the first degree of pride. In its second degree pride rejoices in another's lack; and in its final phase it repudiates the spiritual good which will not be monopolized.

Envy, which is punished upon the second terrace,

may be crudely distinguished from pride through the fact of a different relationship to its object. The proud man (in his own estimation) already excels his neighbor, but the envious man perceives that his neighbor excels him. To himself the latter seems only seeking equality; the former is consciously insisting upon monopoly. Envy asks for itself *more* and for its neighbor *less;* pride demands for itself *all* and grants to its neighbor *none.*

Anger differs from envy and pride both in the degree and the permanence of its insistence upon self. As its supreme type, Dante chooses Haman, who, "because Mordecai bowed not nor did him reverence," prepared a gallows and sought to have him hanged; and he describes the angry man as one who "through injury appears so to take shame that he becomes gluttonous of vengeance." Thus anger would seem rather an inability to sustain an imagined wrong, than a deliberate desire to inflict wrong, and we may trace its root to that undue self-esteem which, insisting upon a recognition beyond its deserts, conceives itself injured when such recognition is withheld.

The common characteristic of pride, envy, and anger is distorted self-love, but the supremacy of self is greatest in pride and least in anger. Advancing to the terrace of Sloth, we find self subordinated,

but not overcome. The soul accepts as its ideal the universal life, but, clogged by the impediment of self, cannot at once create its image. The heart has turned to its true object, but its love is still a feeble flame. It must be fanned into a fervent heat which shall burn out all lesser loves and thus accomplish the soul's emancipation from appetite in its three forms of covetousness, gluttony, and lust. This work is achieved upon the higher terraces, and then the soul, "purified through suffering," is welcomed by the song of angels to the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.

So long as the soul contradicts the spiritual universe it must feel the recoil of the universe as pain. Hence, upon each terrace of Purgatory is imaged the suffering which is the reaction of sin. The bodies of the proud are bent double by the burdens on their backs; the eyelids of the envious are sewn up with iron thread; the angry are involved in thick smoke, and upon the terrace of the slothful "the power of the legs is put in truce." Prostrate and immovable the avaricious purge their sin; in hunger and thirst is punished the gluttony which beyond measure followed appetite, and in purifying flame is burned away unholy love.

The symbolism of the punishments is apparent. The principle of spiritual life is to grow by giving

and by sharing to increase. This principle re-enforces the humble man but presses with intolerable weight upon the proud soul which has repudiated it. Nothing blinds the eyes like envy, and anger creates a smoky moral atmosphere in which all duties are obscure. The inevitable outcome of slothful disuse is loss of power, while avarice, loving supremely earthly things, lifts not the eye toward heaven, and, by extinguishing the love of good, destroys the stimulus to action. Thus, in the truest sense, the avaricious man is prostrate and immovable. The reaction of unbridled appetite is craving, associated with satiety, and through burning shame the souls of carnal sinners must press forward toward the benediction of the pure in heart.

The recoil of the spiritual universe is, however, not the characteristic mark of the purgatorial state. This is even more clearly defined in the "Inferno," where the violation is supreme. Thus, as against the slow and painful progress of the proud in Purgatory, we have their stultification in the "Inferno"; the purgatorial smoke of anger becomes in the "Inferno" boiling mud and a river of blood, while the craving and satiety of penitent gluttons are in the impenitent intensified into the rending of voracious Cerberus and the descent of the "Eternal accursed cold and heavy rain." What the Inferno lacks, and Pur-

gatory possesses, is the vision of the Ideal. It is this which incites the activity through which alone defect can be cancelled, and the effort to actualize it is rewarded by its clearer revelation.

Upon the rock-walls which bound the terrace of the Proud are carved typical examples of humility. This is the most external representation of the Ideal in Purgatory, and follows first upon its symbolic prophecy in the dream of the Eagle. To the envious the ideal of mercy is proclaimed by a passing voice, implying thus an internal sense which makes possible its immediate recognition. Meekness is revealed in an inward vision, and when we reach the terrace of the Slothful we find that the spiritually discerned ideal has become a conscious inciting motive. "Quick, quick"—cry the eager spirits—"so that the time may not be lost by little love," and they spur themselves to fresh ardor by recalling how "Mary to the mountain ran, and Cæsar, that he might subdue Ilerda, thrust at Marseilles, and then ran into Spain." In the souls of those who mourn their avarice the ideal has become so clearly defined that they themselves discern the logical relation between their sin and its punishment, and begin to comprehend the fundamental principle of recoil. To the self-convicted glutton even temptation is turned into warning, and from amid the very branches of the tree for

whose fair fruit he hungers comes the voice which bids him pass on farther without drawing near. The souls upon the final terrace have attained a higher sanctification, for they have learned that subordination of the lesser to the holier love which destroys temptation and emancipates the soul from the danger of a fall. The meeting penitents do not need to avoid each other, but they "kiss one with one, without staying, content with short greeting." Moreover, both the gluttonous and incontinent have come to love their purifying pain, and have penetrated into the "divine depths of the worship of Sorrow." The former declare that the same "wish leads them to the tree which led the Christ rejoicing to say Eli"; and of the latter we are told that they vanish in the fire "like fish in water going to the bottom." Thus, in each advancing stage of development, the ideal becomes a more internal, inclusive, and inciting power.

Increasingly illuminated by the truth, the soul realizes more profoundly the sin that contradicts it. Hence, the revelation of ideal types of character is complemented by vivid presentations of the seven deadly sins. The humility of the Virgin throws into relief the pride of Lucifer, and the love of Orestes accentuates the envious hate of Cain. For the same reason, with decreasing sin comes increasing sensi-

tiveness of repentance. "O noble conscience and without a stain," sings the poet, "how sharp a sting is trivial thought to thee!" By the souls who are being purged of avarice we are told "that no more bitter pain the mountain has." Nowhere does Dante manifest such shrinking as in view of the cleansing flames of the topmost terrace; and it would even seem that the crowning moment of his anguish is that in which, arraigned and condemned by Beatrice, he falls swooning upon the bank of Lethe. So the final judgment comes for each one of us when, with awakened eyes, we gaze upon Him whom we have pierced. Seeing what He is, we see all we are not.

Twice in the course of his progress from the gate of Purgatory to the Earthly Paradise does Dante sleep and dream. The first dream comes to him after he has painfully circled around the terrace of Sloth, the second after he has issued from the flame, and, wearied in his ascent toward the summit of the mount, "of a stair has made his bed." In the one he has a vision of a deceiving Siren, who, seeking to allure him, is put to flight by a "Lady saintly and alert"; in the other he beholds a beautiful woman walking in a meadow, singing and gathering flowers. Her song is a key to Dante's theory of the method of spiritual development:

" Know, whosoever may my name demand,
That I am Leah, and go moving round
My beauteous hands to make myself a garland,
To please me at the mirror ; here I deck me ;
But never does my sister Rachel leave
Her looking-glass, and sitteth all day long.
To see her beauteous eyes as eager is she
As I am to adorn me with my hands :
Her seeing and me doing satisfies."

Taken in connection with the vision of the Eagle, which anticipates the poet's transition to the gate of Purgatory, the inner meaning of these dreams becomes clear. As the flight to the Empyrean was a symbolic presentation of the soul's ascent to God through contemplation of his nature, so the Siren shows the fleshly sins which must be overcome before the Divine Ideal can become incarnate in the man ; and the " Lady saintly and alert " typifies the will, now purged of sloth, and sanctified by the vision of the truth. It is worthy of note that after the ascent from the terrace of Sloth sin is no longer described as obscuring vision, but only as impeding progress. We hear no more of " the smoke-stains of the world," though much still of " the malady which all the world pervades," the need of " unloosing the knot of debt," and the obligation to " circle around the mount which straightens those whom the world made crooked."

The third dream is a synthesis of the other two.

If vision reacting upon desire incites to effort, so effort crowned with achievement makes possible clearer vision. To be good is to see the good, and only in identification with the divine is the divine fully revealed. When development is complete there is no real distinction between the active and the contemplative life. Leah may still gather flowers, but she does so that she may please herself at the mirror; or, in prosaic statement, activity is to her simply the condition of insight. Dante's waking experiences correspond, moreover, with the premonitions of his sleep, for when he comes into the Earthly Paradise it is by Matilda (identified by all commentators as the type of sanctified activity) that he is drawn through Lethe and led to Beatrice.

In order to understand the spiritual state figured by Dante in the Earthly Paradise we must keep clearly in mind the thought of Purgatory as a purifying process. Progress through the sevenfold realm means the gradual elimination of selfishness, and, as correlative to this, increasing degrees of spiritual fellowship. It is worthy of note that throughout this second division of the Divine Comedy references to God are few and indirect. The vision of God is the blessedness of the Heavenly Paradise. The Earthly Paradise is a transition toward this joy, and

represents a state of mind in harmony with the Church, or, differently expressed, entrance into the life of God as incarnate in the world.

The order of Dante's experiences in the Earthly Paradise is very suggestive. Declared by Virgil king over himself and free either to sit quiet or to walk among the beauties which surround him, he feels "eager to search in and around the heavenly forest," and moves forward until his progress is barred by a stream so clear that by comparison "earth's most limpid waters seem obscure." Upon the opposite bank he sees Matilda gathering flowers, and learns from her that this stream is Lethe, which, "issuing from a fountain safe and certain, descends with virtue which takes away all memory of sin." Then suddenly warned to look and listen, the poet "beholds a lustre run athwart the spacious forest, and hears a delicious melody in the luminous air." This light and music herald the revelation of the Church, imaged as a triumphal chariot drawn by Christ under the form of the Griffin; a mystic animal which, being half-lion and half-eagle, symbolizes that union of the divine and human "which neither confounds the natures nor divides the person." Preceding the chariot are seven apparently self-moving candlesticks, representing the seven gifts of the Spirit; and the books of the Old Testament personified as

twenty-four elders clad in the white garments and crowned with the lilies of faith. Surrounding the chariot are the four apocalyptic beasts, crowned with green, the color of hope, and representing the four gospels; four nymphs robed in purple, who personify the moral virtues of prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude; and three nymphs clad in white, green, and red, and denoting the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. In the rear follow seven elders, robed in white but crowned with the roses of love, and representing the remaining books of the New Testament.

Very evidently we have here the representation of a visible institution, and not a revelation of its invisible life. But suddenly out of the midst of the great procession arises a solitary cry—"Come with me, my spouse, from Lebanon." Shouted three times by "one from heaven commissioned," it is echoed by all, and then, "in the bosom of a cloud of flowers, covered with a white veil, wrapped in a green mantle and vested in color of the living flame," Beatrice descends upon the Chariot of the Church. Spontaneously the mind reverts to the apocalyptic vision of the Holy City, the new Jerusalem coming down from God, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," and recognizes in this descending Beatrice an image of the indwelling Spirit of that great

heavenly Church of which all churches on earth are but types and symbols.

Dante's treatment of Beatrice gives us the key both to his poem and his poetic method. For obviously the Beatrice of the Divine Comedy is primarily the woman Beatrice Portinari. In the "Vita Nuova," describing the moment when he, a child, first met her, a child, Dante affirms: "At that instant the spirit of life which dwells in the most secret chamber of the heart began to tremble with such violence that it appeared fearfully in the least pulses, and tremblingly said these words: 'Behold a God stronger than I, who coming shall rule me.'" There is an echo of this description in the passage of the "Purgatory" which narrates the descent of Beatrice. The spirit of the poet trembles with awe, and, through the occult influence proceeding from "the fair and saintly Lady of his heart," feels "the mighty influence of an ancient love." It is a revival of "the power sublime that had already pierced him through in boyhood," and he "quenches ten years of thirst" in the "light of the eyes whence love once drew his armory." Yet though truly the woman, Beatrice is not the woman alone. "Sitting with ancient Rachel," she suggests the contemplative life, and, "gazing like an eagle at the sun," she indicates its perfection. Still more profoundly ap-

prehended as "One who withdrew from singing Hallelujah to rescue the wanderer from the dark wood" —as one whose stern salutation caused Dante to fall prostrate in contrite shame, and as one whose eyes reflect the Griffin and are themselves "the splendor of the living light eternal"—she shines forth the image of that grace which seeks and convicts the sinner, illuminates the penitent, and, by giving itself to the soul, makes the soul like itself. The Beatrice of Dante is thus one with the "Eternal Womanly" of Goethe, and represents that divine principle which always energizes to draw up the imperfect into the blessedness of its own perfection.

The vision of Beatrice is followed by Dante's passage through Lethe; or—if we may translate the poet's figure—being quickened by a higher revelation, he is pricked with a thornier penitence and thus made susceptible of a further purification. Having crossed the stream that takes away the memory of sin, he joins the procession of the Church, and then, in deeper communion with her who is "light 'twixt truth and intellect," his spirit grows prophetic. With penetrating eyes he scans the history of the Church and beholds worldly power bringing forth spiritual pride with its triple progeny of heresy, schism, and moral corruption. Upon his quickened ear falls the mournful music of the angelic chant—

"O Lord! the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled." Thus he passes out of the communion of the visible into that of the invisible Church, and, regenerated by the waters of Eunoë, becomes "pure and disposed to mount unto the stars."

Contrasting with the "Inferno," which pictures the outcome of selfish individualism in the stultification of the individual, "Purgatory" traces the redemption of man out of individualism into social communion. It treats of the soul's relation to God, not directly but as mediated by the Church, and its lesson is that in the organic relationship of the individual to the social whole is grounded the possibility of spiritual development. Hence the supreme sin is "Contumacy of Holy Church"; and upon the car of the Church descends Beatrice, the immortal image of divine grace. How, through the Church, the individual is lifted into participation with the divine, is the theme of the "Paradise," whose consummation is reached when the soul, "inspired by abundant grace," presumes "to fix its own sight upon the Light eternal."

The only obstacle to spiritual growth lies in ourselves. Goodness divine, which "spurns from itself all envy," is forever shining in ideal beauty and drawing the soul with cords of love. If we do not see the

heavenly vision, it is because we are blinded by sin; if we do not press forward toward it, it is because we are clogged by sin. Well, therefore, shall it be with us if we take to ourselves the stern rebuke and exhortation of the grave warden of Purgatory:

> "What is this, ye laggard spirits?
> What negligence, what standing still is this?
> Run to the mountain, to strip off the slough
> That lets not God be manifest to you!"

PARADISO.

OF the three divisions of the Divine Comedy, the "Paradiso" is the most elusive to sympathy and the most baffling to comprehension. Its difficulties arise from the fact that it pictures, in unfamiliar images, a transcendent range of spiritual experience. We know what it is to sink from less to greater sin, and easily translate the symbolism of the deepening and narrowing circles of the "Inferno." We know something of the struggle through which evil is overcome, and can sympathize with the painful climbing of the tiresome mount. But our minds reconstruct with difficulty that vanished theory of the physical universe from which are drawn the images of the "Paradiso," and its blessedness finds few illuminating analogies in our experience. Hence, having stated his sublime theme in the first canto, the poet, in the second, warns all those who have been lightly following him to turn back, adding the grave words: "The sea I sail has never yet been passed."

With the warning, however, comes encourage-

ment. We are reminded of Glaucus, who, eating of the food of the gods, became himself divine. "Thirst for the realm deiform" has power to bear us on, and fervent desire is at once the pledge and prophecy of attainment. Dante's thought is the same so wonderfully elaborated by Gœthe in "Faust," that aspiration measures man and decides his destiny. The highest gifts we crave are ours by right of the power to crave them.

The key-note of all Christian thought is recognition of the double truth of man's present abasement and his exalted destiny. This consciousness formulates in theology the related doctrines of total depravity and the incarnation. It inspires the scriptural paradoxes that when weak we are strong; when dead to self, most alive to God. It is the vital breath of prayer which asks for all things because it knows it lacks all things. Man is poor, naked, helpless, blind, yet he confidently expects to be redeemed into the likeness of God because he knows that the Giver of all good cannot withhold the greatest of all gifts—Himself. As in his giving there can be no stint, the largeness of his gift is measured only by the capacity of the recipient. Increasing capacity is expressed in enlarging desire. Hence, God requires of man no fitness save a felt sense of need, or, as our poet puts it:

"Regnum coelorum suffereth violence
From fervent love and from that living hope
That overcometh the divine volition;
Not in the guise that man o'ercometh man,
But conquers it because it will be conquered;
And conquered, conquers by benignity."

The insight which gives unity to the Divine Comedy is, that the generic is the Divine. The nature common to all men is the Deity immanent in each man. Organized society is the incarnation of this universal Spirit. Conscience is the pledge of its indwelling. Sin is violation of the tie which binds the individual to the social whole and its recoil, as imaged in the "Inferno," is the exclusion of the sinner from that organic life which he has attacked. The climax of the purgatorial process is reached when the penitent, finally surrendering self, enters into the communion of the Church. The burden of the "Paradiso" is the relationship of the Church to its head. It celebrates the eternal quickening of the immanent by the self-communication of the transcendent God, and images the joy of redeemed humanity in its increasing ability to receive and hold in itself the fulness of the divine life.

The transition from earth to heaven is marked by the reversal of natural laws. Contrary to earthly precedent the poet finds himself rising through the realm of fire, and marvels in what way "he transcends

these bodies light." Beatrice explains to him that in the heavenly world the downward gravitation of earth is overcome by the upward gravitation of spiritual desire. In like manner the material law that one thing excludes another is reversed in heaven, for Dante is received into the moon "as water doth receive a ray of light, remaining still unbroken," and learns to his astonishment that "one dimension may tolerate another." This hint prepares us for the farther revelation that the spiritual world is "not in space nor turns on poles," and that there "near nor far nor add nor take away." And as it is beyond space so it is outside of time, for time is exclusive through the succession of its moments. Therefore we read that "neither after nor before proceeded the going forth of God upon these waters." The confines of heaven are "love and light," and even these mingle and conjoin in "light intellectual replete with love." For such a realm there can be no other where "than in the mind Divine," and entrance into it is its entrance into us. Thus heaven is not a place but a spiritual state. Paradise is the triumph of grace which doth "imparadise the mind."

As a whole the universe is good and good only. Evil resides not in the nature of things but in their partial interpretation. Placing himself through selfishness in antagonism to a creation rooted and

grounded in love, the sinner concludes that the universe is in antagonism to him. To the apprehension of Caliban the motive of creation is spite. Touched by Mephistopheles the roses of love become consuming flames. And as sin is grounded in selfishness, which is refusal to seek the good of each through the good of all, so intellectual error is grounded in the attempt to explain an infinite universe by its finite parts and to find in time the solution of an eternal process.

It is a suggestive law of spiritual progress that we begin by defining good as the negative of evil, and end by defining evil as the negative of good. Thus the prohibitions of the Decalogue vanish in Christ's positive command of love. So thought advances from the Hindoo Brahm to the Christian Trinity, or from the apprehension of the infinite as mere negation of the finite to the definition of the finite as a vanishing phase in the process of the infinite. In a word, we begin by making our nothingness the measure of the universe, and learn very gradually to make the universe the measure of our nothingness. Increasing insight is progressive reversal of opinion, as increasing holiness is progressive crucifixion of self. The reversal is complete when we see that "where God immediately doth govern the natural law in naught is relevant." Thought is not condi-

tioned in time and space, because time and space have vanished in thought. It cannot be circumscribed, because it is the "all circumscribing." The "stainless spark" of perfect light only *seems* enclosed by what itself encloses.

The ten heavens of the "Paradiso" image cumulative degrees of insight into the nature of the universe as a spiritual whole, and increasing freedom of the individual in its reflection of the generic will. Advance from a lower to a higher state is symbolized in greater light and speed and in more complete unity and interpenetration. The questions discussed become more subtle as we recede from earth, and show profounder grasp of that haunting problem of free will to which the poet's thought seems ever to return.

In the heaven of the Moon Dante places the spirits of those whose allegiance to the Divine will is formal and uncomprehending. This type of character is illustrated by nuns torn from the cloister and forced to marry. It is not assumed that they were reconciled to the violation of their vows, but only that through fear of death they acquiesced in it. Of one we are expressly told that she was never divested of the heart's veil; yet she is blamed because she had not the perfect will which kept Lawrence fast upon the gridiron and strengthened Mucius to hold his hand in the devouring flame.

Like the moon in which they are placed, such spirits have no light in themselves. The truth shines upon them but not in and through them. They recognize the divine as a binding law, but do not feel it as a quickening impulse. Therefore they change with changing circumstance, as the moon rounds into a circle or contracts into a crescent through receiving more or less fully the light of the sun.

Men do not freely die to carry out the will of another, even though the other may be God himself. Men die for that without which life would be no life to them. It is only when we have re-created in ourselves the Spirit by whom we were created. that we are able to subdue the limitations of temperament, defy the coercion of circumstance, and triumph over the suggestions of fear. God, as an external ruler, will always be disobeyed; God, as an internal inspirer, makes his will supremely our own.

Dante's description of the spirits in the moon throws into relief the limitation of their consciousness. "In your miraculous aspect," he says to Piccarda, "there shines I know not what of the divine"; or, as we may paraphrase his words: "In you the divine is not recognizable." All the moon spirits appear as "mirrored semblances," not real, but faintly reflecting reality; they are blessed in the

"slowest sphere" and they vanish "as through deep water something heavy." In prosaic statement, allegiance to an alien will can neither overcome the gravitation of earthly passions nor quicken a zealous love.

The spiritual state symbolized by any given heaven is suggested not only in the description of the spirits to whom it has been assigned as a dwelling-place, but also in the questions discussed by Dante in his approach to and transit through it. He cannot enter the heaven of the Moon until Beatrice has revealed to him that the universe as a whole resembles God. Her brief but conclusive argument is, that order among things implies relationship between things, and universal relationship presupposes a unity in which the things related are included. Hence each thing exists not for itself alone but for all things, and in contributing to the beauty and blessedness of the whole, accomplishes its individual destiny.

To each man is reserved a work which he alone can do. He must find his happiness in doing it, and in the thought that lacking even his feeble effort the universe would be incomplete. This insight enables Piccarda to affirm that "as we are station above station in this realm, to all the realm 't is pleasing"; it inspires the "golden sentence" of Bonaventura,

that "the best perfection of a religious man is to do common things in a perfect manner"; and its echo may be heard in those touching lines of devout George Herbert, which have been the life-long comfort of many a household saint:

> "A servant with this clause
> Makes drudgery divine;
> Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
> Makes that and th' action fine."

The candle may shed but a feeble light, yet without it its own corner were dark. Intent on shining there, it never remembers to mourn that it is not the sun.

It is evident, however, that we may grasp the universe as an including totality, and yet apprehend very faintly its nature and end. We may know that organized society reveals the ideal which is binding on the individual, and yet fail to define to ourselves in what this ideal consists, and to identify it with our own inward aspiration. In such a state of mind we shall inevitably ask with Dante how man can be responsible for broken vows when circumstances have made it impossible to keep them; we shall doubt if each soul has not a definite limit beyond which it cannot pass,—some star whence it came and to which it must return, and weighing in an external balance good and evil, fondly imagine that with particular

deeds of virtue we may atone for a faltering and disloyal will. A formal view of the universe converts spiritual degree into rigid caste, and conceives man not as self-limiting but as limited from without. The solutions of Beatrice affirm freedom in degree. Throughout the heavenly realm the spirits of the redeemed have "sweet life in different degrees," through "feeling more or less the eternal breath." The spirits in the moon are "in one heaven with the seraphim most absorbed in God," and they appear where they do merely "to give sign of the celestial which is least exalted." Good cannot be quantitatively measured, and circumstances cannot force will. We are what we are through inward defect, not outward coercion. Environment is never obstructive to the individual, but the individual may obstruct the influence of environment.

From the heaven of the Moon to the heaven of Mercury Dante passes like "an arrow which strikes upon a mark ere the bowstring quiet hath become." It is interesting to note that this is the last *planetary* transit which the poet is able to measure by time. Hereafter he knows that he is translated to higher salvation "only by the enkindled smiling of the stars" and the growing beauty of Beatrice. At each stage of his ascent creation seems more glorious and grace more divine. In his praises of the "lady fair,

who makes him strong for heaven," the poet exhausts the resources of human speech, amply fulfilling his early hope to "say of her what never was said of any woman." Gazing upon her he is strengthened to rise. Type of illuminating grace, which shines more brightly as the soul is changed into its image, she is seen to pass from good to better so suddenly that "not by time her action is expressed." In the heaven of Mercury she lights the poet with a smile "such as would make one happy in the fire." In ardent Mars her eyes so burn that gazing into them the poet feels he has "touched the bottom of his grace," and ascending to Jupiter she conquers him with a radiance so wonderful that he needs the reminder that "not in her eyes alone is Paradise." In crystal Saturn her beauty has become so resplendent that she dares not shine upon him lest he be consumed to ashes, and when in the eighth heaven his sight has become strong enough "to tolerate her holy smile," he affirms that to sing it all the tongues of all the poets would not avail. In these wonderful passages are inextricably interwoven the man's love for the woman and the poet's rapture in that divine beneficence which, forever creating in man a sacred hunger, forever satisfies him with "celestial food."

More than any other planet, Mercury is veiled by

the rays of the sun. It is thus symbolic of that type of character which is inspired to great achievement by the love of fame. Fame may be defined as the reflection of the good in the consciousness of men, and he who makes it his supreme motive values not light but the mirror which gives back light. To him the ideal is still external,—a type in the minds of others to which he conforms. Hence he has no true individuality, but loses himself in alien thought and will, as the light of Mercury is lost in the light of the sun. He lives not for what *he* sees to be highest and best, but for the best as it appears to others.

While the spirits in the moon know only that there are degrees of blessedness, those in Mercury see justice as the spiritual principle which determines degree. "Our joy," says Justinian, "lies in commensuration of our wages with our desert." We rejoice in justice, though through it we are excluded from higher joy. Let God be true though every man is a liar. Let us trust him though he slay us. Far better bear defect in ourselves than arbitrariness in the order of the universe.

The application of the principle of justice to all particular cases which may arise under it is the work of law; hence, the typical spirit in the heaven of Mercury is Justinian, to whom the world is indebted

for the famous code by which all free nations are governed. The execution of law demands the State, which thus becomes the instrument for carrying out the divine will, and for this reason Dante celebrates in the discourse of the typical lawgiver the glory of the typical empire. In the history of Rome, as rapidly reviewed by the poet, is shown the significance of organized society, which, by returning upon each man his own deed, fulfils towards him the righteous judgment of God.

To know God as justice, is to have in so far a positive thought of him. To rejoice in justice, is to begin to be like him. Therefore the spirits in Mercury are said to be "kindled with the light which through the whole of heaven is spread." There is light in them as well as around them, and they not only reflect it, "but as effulgence clear it issues from them."

To capacitate Dante for ascent from Mercury to Venus, Beatrice shows him the limitation of the principle of justice, and prepares him to enter into the profounder insight of the third order of spirits. A just God reigneth, but clouds and darkness are round about him, and a fire goeth before him and burneth up his enemies. At sight of his lightnings the earth trembles, and in his presence the hills melt like wax. How shall the imperfect stand in the

presence of the perfect? How shall the sinner ever become emancipate from sin? Justice explains degree, but not transition from a lower to a higher degree. It can reward, but not redeem; it can punish, but not develop. Its stern demand is that the sinner "shall fill up where transgression empties with righteous pains for criminal delights." When suffering shall have balanced sin, which can be never, then, and not till then, will justice be satisfied.

The verdict of justice is final in fixing the recoil of the absolute type upon each grade of character antagonistic to it. "Even in material things," says Thomas Aquinas, "pressure causes reaction. Each violated order vindicates itself through recoil upon that which violates it, and this recoil is punishment. Sin violates a threefold order (which yet is one), the order of reason and the orders of human and divine law. Hence its recoil in the pains of conscience, in the penalties of human society, and in the punishment of God." Written in sombre color upon the gates of the city dolent shall always be read the words: "Justice incited my sublime creator,"—and I eternal last. To the consciousness of the sinner heaven itself were hell. The mind which is unlike the Good supreme cannot be blanched with its light.

Insight into justice, as that which vindicates man's freedom through the return of his deed, shatters for-

ever all theories of salvation not grounded in character. God himself can save man only by producing in man a type of character conformed to his own. Faith in a redemption wrought for us is efficacious only as the instrument by which redemption is wrought in us. Hell and purgatory and heaven—what are they but different attitudes of the individual towards a blessed universe, which, in the already quoted words of the poet, resembles God?

But justice cannot itself be just, unless it capacitates man for the conformity it requires. The implication of justice therefore is grace. Only by giving himself to man can God enable man to be like himself. In the words of our poet,—

> "All the other modes were insufficient
> For justice, were it not the Son of God
> Himself had humbled to become incarnate."

Creation is not a kingdom, but a school; its aim is not to govern, but to educate; its end is not obedience but freedom, and its consummation not allegiance to but identification with the divine.

"Oh, happy fault," exclaims the Church, on Holy Saturday, referring to Adam's sin,—"oh, happy fault, which has brought us so great redemption." Animated by the same spirit, Milton's Adam declares:

> "Full of doubt I stand
> Whether I should repent me now of sin

By me done and occasioned, or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
To God more glory, more good-will to men
From God, and over wrath grace shall abound."

The lost silver inspires the ardent search; the wandering sheep calls forth the shepherd's tenderest care; the prodigal son learns most of the father's love, and there is more joy in heaven over the sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentence. The problem of evil is solved to the penitent who, in his own experience, has learned to know God as the conqueror of evil. He remembers his slavery only to praise his deliverer; he thinks of his sin only as the occasion of God's higher revelation to his soul. Victory in himself is the pledge of victory everywhere, and his own history, seen in perspective, interprets all history as the subjugation of sin by love. In this sense, Folco, speaking for the spirits in Venus, declares that

"Here is no repenting, but we smile
Not at the fault which comes not back to mind,
But at the power which ordered and foresaw."

In the description of the planet Venus, stress is placed upon its epicyclic movement. According to the system of astronomy which lies at the basis of Dante's symbolism, the inferior planets revolve primarily round the sun, and to the circle which

they describe in this movement is given the name of epicycle. By the sun they are carried around the zodiac; hence they perform the true celestial revolution, not of themselves, but as constrained thereto by their desire to follow the sun.

What the sun is to its dependent planets, such is human love to hearts swayed by its influences. It causes the life of the lover to circle around the object loved, and in so far destroys the selfishness which makes each man his own centre. Moreover, in seeking the good of another, man enters into the divine activity, or, as imaged by Dante, revolving about the sun, the planet must needs sweep around the zodiac. In Venus, therefore, are to be seen the spirits who on earth found their supreme joy in human affection. Loving, they learned the nature of love, and penetrated beyond justice into the secret of grace.

The defect of this grade of character is that by imposing limits upon love, it degrades love into a form of selfishness. It will sacrifice self for *another*, but not for *all* others. Its type is the lover finding his heaven in his lady's eyes, not the saint filled with the enthusiasm of humanity and burning with desire to quicken in the most degraded sinner the flickering spark of divine life. In so far as it is inspired by love, it has true individuality; therefore

Venus cannot be veiled, like Mercury, in the rays of the sun. But as its love is limited, its individuality is really dependent upon the object loved. Withdraw its idol, and you paralyze its activity. Its true selfhood is in its other self, and, like Venus, which "woos the sun, now following, now in front," it is forever moved by an external influence, and not impelled by an indwelling energy.

In the heaven of Venus ends the "shadowy cone cast by the world." The spiritual realm through which we have passed is characterized by increasing insight into the nature of the divine. The spirits in the moon perceive that there is an eternal order. This insight delivers the intellect from the fluctuations of opinion, and the will from the restlessness of caprice. There is no coercion in the subjunctive, nor can peace ever be the fruit of perhaps. But the certainty of a divine order is the entrance into paradise. In Mercury this order is defined as justice, and in Venus as redeeming grace. In the higher heavens we shall find not deeper definitions of the divine, but a progressive identification of the divine and human. There can be nothing higher nor deeper than love, but we have yet to see that love must make all things like itself.

Ascending from the heaven of Venus to that of the sun, a wondrous change comes over the poet.

Henceforth the reader must feed himself, for Dante's interest is now diverted wholly to "the theme of which he has been made the scribe." His love is so absorbed in God that "even Beatrice in oblivion is eclipsed." His joy is in "contemplating the master's art"; his ear is attent only to the heavenly choir who sing

> "Not Bacchus nor Apollo,
> But in the divine nature persons three,
> And in one person the divine and human."

Here for the first time he comprehends that creation is a rising process whose consummation can only be in God. Man interprets nature; he is her crown and king, the reason of her being, the reward of her struggle, and the solution of her contradictions. But how solve the contradictions in man himself? A worm of the dust, yet with thought that reaches into eternity, and longings which can be quenched only in God. As nature is redeemed in him, shall he not be redeemed in God, and is not the incarnation the goal towards which all history strives? The truth *reflected* in the moon is thus *revealed* in the sun, and the "two dimensions which may tolerate" each other "interpreted as the union in one person of the human and divine."

The spirits in the sun are theologians who have lived to elucidate the wonderful doctrines of the

trinity and incarnation, or saints who have borne witness in their lives to the indwelling of their God. Here Thomas Aquinas is a vivid and triumphant light, and Bonaventura is made fair by love. Here flames the "burning breath of Beda," who was great in contemplation; and here is the "lustre of that taper" which in the flesh looked most into the loving ministry of angels. All glow with inward light and burn with inward ardor, for to them the eternal order of the universe has been transfigured into an eternal act, and spiritual degree has vanished in spiritual transition. Before them shines the hope of infinite progress, and they know that

> "Will increase whate'er bestows on us,
> Of light gratuitous, the good supreme—
> Light which enables us to look on Him.
> Therefore the vision must perforce increase—
> Increase the ardor which from that is kindled—
> Increase the radiance which from this proceeds."

This glad confession of the spirits in the sun interprets much of the symbolism of the Divine Comedy. Through it we understand the mystic dance of the theologic virtues led now by the white, now by the red,—now by Faith as she gains a clearer vision, now by Love as she glows with the ardor the vision kindles. It clothes with meaning the suggestion that the two wheels of the chariot of the Church are Francis, who is "all seraphic in ardor,"

and Dominic, who is "a splendor of light cherubical"; and teaches us why the merit of Francis should be extolled by Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican, and the glory of Dominic celebrated by the Franciscan Bonaventura. The three concentric circles formed by the sun spirits, and of which the second seems born of the first, while the third vanquishes Dante with the "incandescent sparkling of the Holy Spirit," stand revealed in its light as symbols of the higher hope and more perfect love, quickened by profounder insight into the mystery of God. Finally, it helps us to learn from the "ladies who stop their dance, in silence listening till they have gathered the new melody," that the alternations of paradise are between new revelations of the divine and new creations of the divine within ourselves. The doubt which "springs up in fashion of a shoot at the foot of truth" is nature's impulsion to a greater height, and sight is vanquished in increasing light only that the eye may be made more transparent to it.

The relationship between insight into the divine, aspiration towards the divine, and self-identification with the divine, is ever present to Dante's thought. The three acts are shown, not as separate and successive, but as phases of an inclusive energy, and are identified with the theologic virtues of faith, hope,

and charity. Charity, or love, is the realization within one's self of the ideal perceived by faith, and thus implies faith as its logical antecedent, or rather as the initial phase of its own activity. In this sense "blessedness" is truly said to be rooted in the faculty that sees, and not in that which loves and follows after. No ideal, no effort; no effort, no character. Self-identification with a perceived ideal expands the soul to the measure of a fuller gift, and therefore, until man has become wholly one with God, each heaven attained will but spur the hope of higher attainment.

As the spirits in the sun are the first to recognize the identity of the ideal human and the divine, so those in Mars are the first who consciously take on the form of the universal life. God is love, love is self-giving; self-giving is renunciation of self. Its supreme symbol is the cross, as its supreme historic type is the sacrifice on Calvary. Therefore, the fifth star is "ruddy with love," while its blessed spirits glow with "a red lustre," and "constellated in its depths describe the venerable sign that quadrants joining in a circle make." The appearance of the cross is "of a precious jewel set with gems"; the individual spirits move freely upon it from top to bottom, and from the right horn to the left, but from the ribbon which binds them to it they are never

dissevered. "Their running is upon the radiant fillet, and their seeming is of fire behind alabaster." Through the renunciation of self man is bound forever to the living whole of humanity. Within this unity he moves, and through him, as through a translucent medium, shines the light of the indwelling spirit. Not only is the divine revealed to him, but he has become its revelation to others.

Mars is the heaven of brave thinkers, who gladly bear the world's scorn to declare to the world redeeming truth,—of the heroes who lead the forlorn hope of good against the serried ranks of evil; of the martyrs whose joy is in the death which proclaims eternal life. Here Dante's ancestor, the great crusader, promises him, as reward of patriotic virtue, the martyrdom of banishment and dependence, and the absolute loneliness of truth in a world of lies. Here, too, we learn, as never before, the struggle of the poet's soul. He had craved power and influence among men, and had needed the fearful vision of evil counsellors swathed in flames to teach him so to "curb his genius that it might not run where virtue did not guide." To the lust of power he added the vainglory of genius, and, because he craved for himself an unshared eminence of fame, was constrained to "go all bowed down" around the first cornice of the purgatorial mount. Finally, craven fear had

blanched his cheek at the mere thought that his mission was to penetrate the hidden mysteries of good and evil, and show them forth to men, and, shrinking from the gate of hell, he had sought to evade his destined work. Now, taught by grace that, which if he tell again "will prove a savor of strong herbs to many," he must conquer the cowardice which might make him a timid friend to truth, and, though it cut him off from all the friends to whom his torn heart clings, proclaim from the housetop what he has learned in the closet. The voice of the old crusader bids him lay aside "all falsehood and manifest his vision utterly," while from the spirits upgathered on the cross there comes to him the stirring cry, "Arise and conquer!" The last battle is fought, the last victory won, and crucifying selfish fear as he had crucified ambition and vainglory, the poet enters into the communion of the fifth heaven.

To the cross of Mars succeeds the eagle of Jupiter, for the outcome of self-surrender is self-realization in the organic whole. To the ruddy hue of Mars succeeds the silver light of Jupiter; to the ardor of love concentrated in sacrifice, the radiance of love as diffused in just and beneficent rule.

Dante's description of the eagle is full of significant hints of the truth symbolized by it. In this beautiful

image, "the interwoven souls are made jubilant in sweet fruition"; the meaning of which would seem to be that each man finds in total humanity the realization of his own highest self. Of the perpetual flowers here blossoming the poet "perceives as one the odors manifold"; and when the eagle speaks, it

> "Utters with its beak, both *I* and *mine*,
> When in conception it is *we* and *our*."

The spirits in this realm, themselves once merciful rulers, find their never-failing joy in the mercy of God. Their song is of the Good that draws them to itself; their vision of grace that "from so deep a fountain wells that no eye has ever reached its primal wave." Questioned by Dante how the justice of God may be reconciled with the condemnation of righteous heathen who never heard of Christ, the eagle boldly avows the doctrine that wherever righteousness is found its source is God, and its end, delight in Him, and declares that one of its own brightest lights is the Trojan Ripheus, to whom "the maidens three were for baptism, more than a thousand years before baptizing." The eagle of Jupiter believes in salvation by faith, but its faith is that spiritual one through which the Ethiop shall condemn the merely technical Christian, and souls who never heard of Christ shall at the judgment be nearer to him than many who are loudly calling on his name.

It will be remembered that the spirits in the moon came to peace through the knowledge that each thing exists not for itself alone but for all things. To the saints stationed in Jupiter is revealed the complementary truth that all things exist for each thing. The whole to which the individual surrenders himself returns him to himself enriched with its completer life. Man is not merely an instrument used to carry out a work. He is himself the perfect work which all creation is striving to accomplish. We have an image of the reaction of the whole upon the individual in human institutions. Through the family he is protected in feeble infancy and guided in ignorant childhood. Through the school he is prepared to enter into the experience of the race. Through the organization of labor he receives the ripe results of united endeavor. Through the State justice is dealt to him and as an ideal developed in him. Through the Church the feeble spark of his spiritual aspiration is fanned into living flame. How greatly each man is shaped by mankind is seen in the fact that we define ourselves first as Christians; second, as Europeans or Americans; third, as citizens of a given state; fourth, as belonging to a particular community; fifth, as members of a special family; and finally as individually distinguished from its other members. Insight into the

rich return which mankind makes for each man's paltry gift, transforms the peace of acquiescence into the rapture of self-creative activity. It enables the least of men to share the triumphs of the greatest, while holding up to the greatest the ideal of service to the least. The true king is the servant of all; the humblest subject may see his servant in his king. The divine Saviour washes the feet of his disciples, and in the alien, the pauper, and the criminal commands them to look upon *Him*. As the achievement of each redounds to the advantage of all, we look upon seers, heroes, and saints not envying them for what *we* lack and *they* have, but grateful that through them our lack may be supplied. Without the seer's vison where were our revelation? Without the hero's struggle where were our freedom? Without the saint's devotion where were our sanctification?

In the conception of each man as a centre to which all influence returns, is implied the perfectibility of the individual. As every dewdrop may reflect the sun, so every man may reflect the divine ideal. It is not enough that humanity as a whole should resemble God, but each man must as a perfect mirror give back his perfect image. Man must not only find himself in the world, but the world in himself. The cross of Mars and the eagle of Jupiter

are but symbols of the renunciation through which the individual gives himself to the whole, and of the perfect organization through which the whole returns its influence to him. Ascending with the poet into the golden glory of Saturn, we behold each spirit shining as "a sphere complete in itself," while all the spheres with "mutual rays each other more embellish."

According to the celestial hierarchy of Dionysius, from which Dante borrows much of the symbolism of the "Paradiso," the heaven of Saturn is ruled by that order of angels known as the Thrones. Dante describes them as "thrones of the countenance divine, and mirrors from which shine our God judicant." Dionysius himself affirms that these angels are called thrones because, as the chair receives the sitter, so they receive God in themselves, and in a certain sense carry him to others. The heaven of Saturn would seem therefore to typify that consummate moment of heavenly experience when the individual soul expands to the measure of the divine fulness, and enriched by the total experience of humanity, incarnates total humanity within itself. Each man is now himself plus all other men. He here becomes the teacher, at whose feet he sat; the poet, at whose burning words he marvelled; the State, which kindled his patriotic fervor; and the

Church, through whose sacraments he learned to feed on God. The perfect Son of God, for whose manifestation the whole creation waits, groaning and travailing in pain,—his education is complete, and his Maker shall dwell with him forevermore.

Small wonder, therefore, that, ascending to Saturn, Dante looks in vain for the smile of Beatrice. Small wonder that in this wheel the dulcet symphony of paradise is silent, and the single cry which smites upon the poet's ear stuns him with holy fear. His sight must be disciplined before he may behold grace in her consummate beauty; his ear must be strengthened to bear the hosannas of the happy spirits who chant her perfect gift. Only in the remotest sphere shall he see Benedict, with countenance unveiled, and know the denizens of Paradise even as he is known by them.

In Saturn show themselves the contemplative spirits who, freed from the illusions of sense, saw even while on earth the things invisible. Up and down the golden ladder, which is uplifted beyond all power of mortal vision, they move, and as the poet gazes they vanish from his sight "like a whirlwind that is upward rapt." This is the ladder where, without re-ascending, none descends. Bringing to others the truth it has learned, the devout spirit rises to higher truth. It is Emerson's "stairway of

surprise,"—each step a new insight upon which thought mounts toward its goal.

As in the heaven of Saturn is completed the long education of the individual, it is meet that from hence he should look back over the path he has travelled. Retracing his history he will more truly know himself, and will be prepared to gaze with vision unclouded and acute upon the last salvation. At the bidding of his celestial guide the poet looks down upon the vast world he has put beneath his feet. He sees his native earth and smiles at its ignoble semblance. The moon shines to him now without a shadow; Venus and Mercury appear revolving around the sun, and Jupiter, Mars, and Saturn are seen not only as they are in themselves, but in their relationship to each other. May we not interpret this vision as the poet's recall of the stages of his own spiritual growth? He remembers with a smile the puerile passions and interests of earth; the peace born of their subjection to a principle recognized as universal; the delight of perceived correspondence between the sense of justice in the soul and the reign of justice in the world; and the vanishing of repentance in rejoicing over the great goodness of God. He renews the rapture of that crucial moment when in prophetic vision he saw the divine incarnate in the human; the self-renouncing

ardor which this insight quickened, and the blessedness flowing from recognition of the outpouring of the spirit, through mankind, upon individual men. Then gratefully beholding in himself *one* ripened fruit of the world's endeavor, he almost anticipates the jubilant cry of Beatrice as, entering the heaven of the fixed stars, she bids him

> "Behold the hosts
> Of Christ's triumphal march, and *all the fruit*
> Harvested by the rolling of the spheres."

In the heaven of the Fixed Stars the central figure is Christ. He gives light to all the blessed spirits, as in the time of Dante, the sun was supposed to give light to all the stars. Second only to him in glory is the Virgin, described as the "Rose divine in which the Word divine became incarnate," and around her "circles with joy Gabriel, the angel of the Annunciation." To the angel who promised the divine infant, follow the apostles who proclaimed abroad the coming of the divine man; and, last of all, the first man Adam, who was of the earth earthy, appears redeemed by the second man, who is the lord from heaven, thus interpreting the history of the world as the transition from one to the other.

To become one with God is to become the sharer of his work, and hence to the heaven of

consummation succeeds the heaven of influence. If, heretofore, we have traced insight through its ascending degrees, we now behold influence descending from God through cherubim and seraphim to the least and lowest who aspire toward a higher life. In this realm of crystal clearness and of matchless speed, the nine concentric circles of the angelic hierarchy are attracted by God, and their joy is to attract others to him. From above they take to act beneath, and upward gazing become downward prevailing. We remember Beatrice, who, to save the sinning Dante, "endured in hell to leave the imprint of her feet," and thank our poet for this deepest of all lessons, that those who have been changed into the image of God must work forever to create that image in others.

The careful reader of the "Paradiso" will have noticed that the advent of Dante in each heaven deepens the joy of the spirits dwelling therein. Speaking to the poet, the spirit of Justinian becomes, "by far, more lucent than it was before," and delighting in his sympathy, Folco shines resplendent, "like a fine ruby smitten by the sun." Is it possible, we ask, that there can be increase in the infinite happiness of heaven? Is it possible, answers our poet, that truth shared shall not be truth quickened, or that love shall cease to grow by giv-

ing? Through all eternity new individuals will be rising into the communion of the saints and swelling their already perfect joy. As the moon ideal, *each for all*, was inverted in the Jupiter ideal, *all for each*, so both are transfigured in the insight of the Primum Mobile, which demands that each individual shall see God reflected in every other, and shall reveal to every other the divine as reflected in himself.

Seeing ever more clearly the divine in the human, we have ascended from the slowest to the swiftest sphere. In the final heaven,—place of the "supreme deity who alone doth perfectly see himself,"—there waits for us the higher revelation of the human in the divine. Long since, in the tender planet Venus, we learned what must be the attitude of perfect love to struggling imperfection, but still unsolved remains the deeper question how imperfection came to be. This is the secret of the empyrean, for whose showing forth the poet declares that his language shorter falls than an infant's "who still his tongue doth moisten at the breast."

That our thought may learn to grapple with this deepest mystery, it is declared to us first in symbolic form. Before our eyes a river of light flows betwixt two banks depicted with an everlasting spring. From the river issue living sparks which on all sides sink down into the flowers. The river, the sparks, and

the flowers are, as Beatrice tells Dante, but images or foreshadowing prefaces of truth. He must bathe his eyes in the living water that he may truly see, and drink of it that his thirst for knowledge may be slaked. Through such final baptism he enters into the glory of the empyrean; in such heavenly eucharist partakes completely of his God. Purified by these sacramental acts, he beholds the river transformed out of its length into round, while the individual flowers upon its bank blend into the White Rose of Paradise. Into this flower of love, symbol of the invisible church, descend the angels, bringing sweet influence from God; and then, ascending, they waft back to him the fragrant thanksgiving of the saintly host.

In the thirteenth canto of the "Paradiso," the generation of the Son from the Father is imaged as the flowing of effulgent light from its fountain. Presumably, therefore, the similar image used in describing the empyrean symbolizes the same truth, and in the *length* of the shining river we are to see the outpouring of the Father,—in the roundness the divine perfection of the Son. Still expanding, the wonderful light of the Logos becomes so wide that "its circumference would be too large a girdle for the sun," and mirrors itself in the countless ranks of beatified saints who have been made one in the

spirit. Herein is clearly suggested the truth that the invisible church (already defined as the ripened fruit of creation) is in the image of the Son, as the Son is in the image of the Father.

The doctrine that all things were made by the Word, suggested in the symbols just described, is still more explicitly revealed in the final vision of the "Paradiso." Gazing at last, direct upon his God, the poet beholds "within the deep and luminous subsistence of the High Light three circles of three-fold color and of one dimension." "By the second circle is the first reflected," and this second circle, when contemplated by the poet's eye, "within itself of its own very color seems painted with the effigy of man." The incarnation of the divine in man finds its only possible ground in the eternal being of man in God. The historic atonement manifests in time an act complete from all eternity, and forever the human and divine have been made one, not by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by the taking of the manhood into God.

To rethink for ourselves the poet's thought, we must recur to the insight of the spirits in Venus, that in love is to be found the keynote to the harmony of the universe. Dante reaffirms this doctrine in the closing words of the sacred poem, and leaves us as his final legacy, the insight that "it is love

which moves the sun and the other stars." In love, therefore we must seek the solution of the deep mysteries of the trinity and incarnation.

Love implies an object distinct from and yet identical in nature with the being who loves. Any object less than himself leaves his love a mere unrealized potentiality. Man could never bestow all his love on a stone or animal; hence had he only stones and animals to love he could not be completely himself. So infinite love demands an infinite object, and thus implies that dualism in the Divine Being formulated in theology as the eternal Father and the eternally begotten Son. Love, whose very essence is self-communication, must have always completely communicated itself. To suppose otherwise is to introduce potentiality and therefore imperfection into our thought of the Father. On the other hand, in self-communication or generation there is implied logical movement from antecedent phases of less to greater perfection. These logical phases of development eternally beheld by the Father in the Son and eternally recognized by the Son as he contemplates his relationship to the Father, are actualized in the process of creation whose consummation is the incarnation of the divine in the human, and the redemption of man from the multiplicity of selfish individuals into the unity of the Spirit.

The ascending insights of paradise are God in the universe,—God in the individual,—each individual in every other,—all individuals in God. This final vision is the truth "beyond which nothing true expands itself," and in which "all intellect finds rest." In God we live and move and have our being. In the mystery of His triune nature is the pledge of our immortal union with Him, and out of the daring humility born of perfect faith we may echo the words of the old mystic:

"I know without me God cannot a moment live;
If I to death should go, He, too, would death receive."

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